

**PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION**

**Of**

**PARTNERS OF THE AMERICAS GRANT  
FROM THE U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
(LAG-G-00-93-00032-00)**

focusing on the  
*Inter-American Democracy Network*

***FINAL REPORT***

**January 5, 2000**

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## Chapter I – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On August 26, 1993, the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and Partners of the Americas (POA), a U.S. private voluntary organization, signed a five-year cooperative agreement (Grant No. LAG-G-00-93-00032) for \$1,251,184 to support the Regional Civic Education Project. That agreement was amended in September 1995, extending the completion date to August 26, 2000, and providing funds for POA to work with the Inter-American Democracy Network (IADN), which had been initiated by four Latin American non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and one university: *Conciencia* and *Fundación Poder Ciudadano* from Argentina, the *Instituto de Investigación y Autoformación Política (INIAP)* from Guatemala, *Participa* from Chile, and the *Departamento de Ciencia Política de la Universidad de los Andes (UniAndes)* of Colombia. Through subsequent amendments, POA was also mandated to provide institutional-strengthening assistance to *Acción Ciudadana*, a newly formed Guatemalan NGO which USAID/Guatemala wished to support, and to carry out an initiative to link Cuban NGOs and counterpart institutions in the Americas.\* For these purposes, by September 1998, the total budget had been increased to \$7,182,323.

In keeping with the cooperative agreement, the purpose of this evaluation is “*to assess the process, impact, and sustainability of citizen participation activities carried out under the grant, both through partnerships [North-South Partnerships between POA chapters in the United States and Latin America] and the Inter-American Democracy Network,*” giving primary emphasis to the latter. It was determined that this evaluation be participatory, actively involving all major stakeholders (USAID, POA, and the five southern NGOs). To initiate the process, the Scope of Work (SOW) was developed by USAID and POA in consultation with the five southern Founding Members (FMs), and representatives of those institutions also participated in data-collection tasks during six field trips to 13 countries.

This report is divided into seven chapters. In addition to this summary, these include: an introduction, with information on the evaluation team and methodology; background material on the evolution of the Network, key aspects of the grant, and the allocation of resources; findings; conclusions; recommendations; and lessons learned. All findings, conclusions, and recommendations were compiled through document review, the POA database that houses information on the objectives and indicators formulated by the six FMs for performance monitoring purposes, and material collected in the field by evaluation teams.

Among the principal conclusions of this evaluation is that, having successfully dealt with start-up challenges, the Network has evolved into an effective mechanism for engaging citizen participation across the region in the democratic process and is now in a position to capitalize on experience to date and consolidate the gains made.

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\* Because of the special circumstances surrounding the relationship between *Acción Ciudadana* and the Network, information on that organization is included in **Annex E**. The Cuban linkage activity was not included in the Scope of Work for this evaluation.

This evaluation found that the Network has collaborated with over 150 civil society organizations (CSOs)—some of which became Associate Members (AMs) through formal agreements with FMs and went on to share the methodologies learned with their clients and partners. The six component areas in which activities have been carried out are: *Deliberation*, based on the methodology pioneered in the United States by the Kettering Foundation, with which southern FMs had a prior relationship and which continues to support their inclusion in its activities; *Citizen Participation at the Local Level*; *Civic Education*, *Voter Education*, *Social Responsibility*, and *Capacity Building/Institutional Development*. Over 7,000 people attended deliberation and civic education events, and over 250 national issues forums were held. Network members have incorporated fundraising methods, the deliberation methodology, civic education issues, candidate databases, election monitoring techniques, and new partnerships into their organizations.

Examples of increased participation included cases where citizens came together to promote community change in the form of better water and sewage systems, community centers, implementation of more participatory budget processes, and improved roads. Deliberation techniques were used to advocate on behalf of children's and women's rights and to prioritize citizens' views and ensure their participation in post-hurricane reconstruction efforts in Central America and education in Colombia. CSOs began to form alliances with municipal authorities and the private sector, and other organizations learned to mobilize resources, thus contributing to a strengthened civic society sector in the region.

The assistance provided by FMs to the AMs targeted by them has taken the form of training, technical assistance, and small grants. It was found that more than half of Network activities have centered around the deliberation component (pursued by four of the five southern FMs), the methodology that had originally brought them together at Kettering, where discussions had led to their decision to form the Network and advocate with USAID for support. (To avoid complications, it was USAID that suggested using the existing POA grant for that purpose.)

Among the chief start-up challenges confronting the Network—as reported by southern FMs—have been the inability of the six founding organizations to coalesce rapidly, the lack of clarity concerning the role and decision-making authority of POA as “grantee” and the five Latin American founders as “sub-grantees,” uneven communications, inadequate exchange opportunities, and the need to establish administrative/reporting systems. On the other hand, POA, while agreeing that maintaining a working agreement among FMs on roles and relationships was a challenge throughout the grant period, felt that communication and exchange practices among FMs were adequate. As mentioned, these challenges have been largely overcome.

Findings and conclusions concerning North-South Partnerships can be found in **Annex G**.

Based on a careful analysis of the findings reported in relation to the Network, and in accordance with the SOW, the following **conclusions** were reached:

1. The Network has shown itself to be a valuable mechanism for engaging Latin American organizations in the promotion of citizen participation in efforts to strengthen democratic governance in the region. It is about to enter a period of transition, during which the gains made to date could be consolidated through a process of careful, participatory planning. This would include the identification of strategically important challenges to further democratization currently present in the environment and the improvement of the Network's communications system, governance structure, and decision-making procedures.
2. Working with the Network has increased participating organizations' resource base, enabled them to develop new contacts and a greater national and international presence, and increased their capability to carry out citizen participation activities.
3. Initial evidence suggests that the Network has helped increase citizen participation in the region. Findings indicate a wide range of examples of such impact. However, this is difficult to document in a systematic fashion. In general, it is costly and difficult to collect data regarding the impact of citizen participation activities. The Network has been developing a monitoring and evaluation system; however, it is not yet in full operation. There is significant overlap between activities in the six program components, all of which tend to be process-oriented, leading to the risk of double-counting and confusion when attempting to assess results.
4. While there were benefits associated with using six components to plan Network programs when the IADN got started (a supply-driven strategy), a demand-driven approach would produce more effective results in the future. By limiting services to pre-determined components, the most pressing needs of the organizations served are not always taken into account, thus diminishing prospects for longer-term sustainability. A demand-driven approach within previously identified parameters would likely produce more effective results.
5. While, over time, the FMs have increasingly coalesced as a group, they have continued to work separately, as though each had its own grant. Issues of organizational self-interest and control placed an undue burden on the process.
6. In the early phase, confusion among FMs with regard to Partners' program management and coordination role affected Network development. The need to establish systems and procedures created additional challenges and confusion between USAID-imposed requirements and those mandated by Partners, particularly with regard to administrative procedures, pointing to the need for the periodic review of procedures.
7. With regard to relations between Founding and Associate Members, most interviewees reported strong professional ties. While FMs have taken advantage of

opportunities to establish communication with AMs, adequate communication and opportunities for the exchange of experience and information across the entire Network is a key challenge that needs to be addressed if the Network is to grow and prosper.

8. While the structure of the Network has been hierarchical to reflect the transference of methodologies from FMs to AMs, most IADN members feel it is now time to adopt a more horizontal approach. The existence of two classes of membership has led to resentment among AMs, especially those that feel they have much to offer the Network but are only invited to receive services. Use of the term “Founding Member” could become a means for simply recognizing Network pioneers, rather than for designating decision-making status and funding eligibility.
9. In nearly all cases, the issue of follow-up by Network members after the provision of services is key to the sustainability of the activities assisted, the level of confidence engendered among participants, and the accurate assessment of the results obtained.
10. The deliberation methodology has been successfully transferred to a sizable number of target AMs that, for the most part, have adapted it and incorporated it into their work. In some instances, deliberation has served as a means to stimulate advocacy or initiate specific projects. In other cases, where deliberation is viewed as an end in itself, subsequent action is left up to participants, with no follow-up by sponsors. While there is evidence that deliberation as a means can produce concrete results, there are as yet no data to demonstrate that, if seen as an end, deliberation increases citizen participation.
11. Given that there are significant differences in the way in which deliberative forums are structured and conducted and that the Network has accumulated an impressive amount of experience in this area, it is uniquely well-positioned to analyze these differences as related to the results obtained to help inform the future international efforts of the Kettering Foundation and others interested in this methodology.
12. The creation of the Central America sub-network is an interesting initiative that provides insights into a number of aspects of network building. Through the process of creating country chapters, members learned to work together towards a common goal. However, some of the chapters are still weak and would need help in such areas as strategic planning, team-building, communication, and conflict management if they are to be consolidated. Further strengthening could be achieved by moving beyond deliberation to incorporate other approaches to citizen participation. Also, the experience points to the need for more fluid communication and information sharing mechanisms across countries with less developed technological infrastructures.
13. Relations between POA and USAID have been very positive. There is potential for greater interaction between IADN members and USAID missions that could be explored to identify areas of mutual interest and potential funding opportunities. A number of mission portfolios include areas such as human rights, justice sector

reform, civil society, or municipal development, all of which involve citizen participation in democratic governance. Moreover, a good number of Network members work in other USAID strategic sectors, including environment, health and nutrition, education, and economic growth. Conversely, citizen participation is an important element in mission programs in other sectors, such as environment and health. Contact between missions and the IADN could be pursued by Network members and facilitated by the sponsoring organization and the LAC Bureau through direct contact with mission personnel and the sharing of timely information about Network activities. This effort could be further reinforced if Network members took the initiative to brief themselves on the strategic plans of the missions.

During the data-collection process, interviewees were invited to make recommendations for strengthening the Network in the future. Literally dozens were presented and fell into a number of major themes. They were therefore categorized and consolidated, resulting in the following set of overall **recommendations**. Specific aspects of these recommendations and the suggestions presented by interviewees for how they might be implemented are also discussed in Chapter VI.

1. **Strategic Planning:** The Network should take advantage of the time still available under the USAID grant to formulate a Strategic Plan to help ensure its continued operation and guide its actions over the next three to five years. Such a plan should be developed through a participatory process, involving all concerned in the identification of strategic priorities, based on an analysis of current political realities within the region, IADN experience to date, and the design of appropriately targeted program initiatives.
2. **Allocation of Resources During the Transition:** Grant funds remaining for the year 2000 should be used for two major purposes: a) to complete processes already underway that are of strategic importance to the Network, and b) to support joint activities by Founding Members.
3. **Communication and Visibility:** To support the consolidation of the Network, and the full integration of all members, a regular, programmed system of communication should be designed and put into operation. The new system should be used to facilitate participation in the strategic planning process and should include the continuation and expansion of the web page, plus the use of other electronic means. It should also promote greater visibility of the Network through contact with national and international donors, the media, and other key actors.
4. **Membership and Governance:** There should be an orderly expansion of Network membership, and decision-making should be democratized, allowing for participation by all. The governance structure should be reorganized, becoming horizontal rather than hierarchical and ensuring that all members have the same opportunities to receive grants, give sub-grants, or request services.

5. **Activities and Impact:** Geographic divisions and the compartmentalization of the Network's offerings into six discrete components should be eliminated in favor of an approach which is at once more strategic and more demand-driven. Moreover, in planning future activities, Network members should give serious consideration to the importance of follow-up for the achievement of longer-term impact and the potential for sustainability.
6. **Administrative Capacity:** The administrative capacity of all Network organizations receiving funding—grantees and sub-grantees alike—should be assessed, and resources should be identified for providing training or technical assistance to those that are weak in this area.
7. **Continued support:** In considering whether to continue funding Network operations as a vehicle for pursuing its DG strategic objective, USAID should recognize the cost-benefit advantages of capitalizing on its initial investment, especially now that the difficult task of start-up has been accomplished, valuable lessons have been learned, and results to date are most promising.



## **Chapter II – INTRODUCTION**

In the past decade, Latin America and the Caribbean have experienced an unprecedented movement towards democracy. All but one country in the region has made the transition from authoritarian rule to democratically elected government. This trend has opened new avenues for the participation of civil society and citizens in democratic processes. While there have been many gains toward increasing the role that citizens and civil society play in the hemisphere, there are a number of obstacles as well. These include, but are not limited to: the fragmentation of the civil society sector in most countries, a weak tradition of civic culture and participation in the political arena, and the negative effect of extreme poverty on the effectiveness of CSOs and on the ability of citizens to participate actively.

### **A. PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION**

This report presents information developed through a participatory evaluation of Grant No. LAG-G-00-93-00032-00 from the USAID Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean to Partners of the Americas for the Regional Civic Education Project. This Cooperative Agreement, which provides a total of \$7,182,323, went into effect on August 26, 1993, and has a completion date of August 26, 2000. The purpose of this evaluation is *“to assess the process, impact, and sustainability of citizen participation activities carried out under the grant, both through partnerships and the Inter-American Democracy Network,”* giving primary emphasis to the latter (see Scope of Work in **Annex A**).

The evaluation was carried out between March and October 1999 and involved the participation of all major stakeholders in various aspects of the process. These included USAID/LAC/RSD and the six Founding Members of the Network: Partners of the Americas (POA), Conciencia and Fundación Poder Ciudadano from Argentina, Universidad de los Andes of Colombia, Instituto de Investigación y Autoformación Política (INIAP) from Guatemala, and Participa from Chile.

### **B. TEAM COMPOSITION & METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH**

As outlined in the Scope of Work (SOW), the evaluation team consisted of two tiers: Core and Extended teams. The Core Team, which coordinated the overall process, was composed of four members: Joan Goodin of Management Systems International (MSI) who, following development of the Scope of Work, was contracted by POA to serve as Team Leader; Principal Investigator Stephanie McNulty, a USAID contractor from the Academy for Educational Development; Karen Anderson, USAID/LAC/RSD Democracy Officer; and POA Program Director Martha Cecilia Villada. Extended Team members included representatives of all Founding Members (FMs) of the Inter-American Democracy Network (IADN) and other personnel from USAID.

To initiate participation in the evaluation process, the SOW was developed in consultation with all FMs and a number of other organizations that had participated in the Network. While members of the Core Team reviewed documents and interviewed key

informants in Washington, field-based data collection was carried out by the Extended Team through a series of six trips to a total of 13 countries. POA staff prepared background materials for each trip and provided briefings for team members located in Washington. In each case, the FM responsible for the activities to be explored at the country level took responsibility for logistics and scheduling arrangements but did not take part in interviews with participating organizations. Representatives of USAID, POA, and other FMs (not working in targeted countries) were members of the various teams. Thus, the approach employed became known as “cross evaluation.” While it had been agreed that no FM would participate in interviews with another FM, those consulted included representatives of all FMs, nearly 40 Associate Members, POA chapters, USAID operating units, the Kettering Foundation, and other key informants. (See **Annex B** for list of persons interviewed.)

The countries visited and the composition of the six field teams was as follows: \*

- **Bolivia and Peru:** Team Leader Stephanie McNulty, Robert Asselin of POA;
- **El Salvador and Guatemala:** Team Leader Stephanie McNulty, Lelia Mooney of FM Conciencia (Argentina), Andrea Allen of USAID/G/WID;
- **Honduras and Nicaragua:** Team Leader Stephanie McNulty, Robert Asselin of POA, Andrea Allen of USAID/G/WID;
- **Brazil and Paraguay:** Team Leader Karen Anderson of USAID/LAC/RSD, Gabriel Murillo of FM DECIPO-UniAndes (Colombia), Elfidio Cano of FM INIAP (Guatemala), Martha Cecilia Villada of POA;
- **Colombia and Ecuador:** Team Leader Joan Goodin, Miguel Pellerano of FM Poder Ciudadano (Argentina), Martha Cecilia Villada of POA;
- **Uruguay, Argentina, and Chile:** Joan Goodin (visits to three FMs).

Activities in the countries visited included focus groups and key informant interviews, observation of IADN-sponsored events, and the collection of additional documentation. (See **Annex C** for list of documents reviewed.) Tailored interview protocols had been drafted for this purpose. During interviews, those consulted were asked for any recommendations they might have for strengthening the Network in the future. Following trips, field teams drafted country reports in accordance with a format that had been developed in order to facilitate the cross-country compilation of information needed to address the questions posed in the SOW.

Other information for this evaluation of the Network came from the data submitted by FMs in accordance with the indicators they had selected to measure progress in the

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\* In April 1999, prior to initiation of the formal evaluation process, Karen Anderson of USAID visited Panama and interviewed key informants regarding Network activities there. The findings of those interviews are included in this report.

various activity areas. These data are maintained by POA, which is responsible for their aggregation, analysis, and transmission to interested parties.

It was determined by the FMs, together with the Core Team, that because findings and conclusions regarding North–South Partnership did not relate directly to the Network, they should be presented in a separate annex to this report. (See **Annex G** for that information.)

This draft report is a compilation of all findings, conclusions, and recommendations gathered by the Core and Extended evaluation teams during the data collection process. It was drafted in late September by the Team Leader and Principal Investigator and presented to Partners on September 29. POA transmitted the draft to USAID and all FMs for discussion and revision during the semi-annual founders’ meeting held at POA headquarters from 20 to 22 October, 1999. Following a day-long discussion of the draft, it was agreed that FMs would submit their final comments and suggested revisions to the Core Team within a week for analysis and incorporation in this final version of the evaluation report.

### **C. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The evaluation team takes this opportunity to express its gratitude to all who contributed their time and the benefit of their experience to guide us through the information-collection process. We also sincerely appreciate the many insights and recommendations offered by those contacted. Indeed, without the ready cooperation of Network members and supporters, as well as representatives of North–South partnerships, it would not have been possible to complete our task in the time allotted and in a satisfactory manner.

We wish to thank the U.S. Agency for International Development and Partners of the Americas for the trust they placed in us and for their continued support during the evaluation process. We also thank the Academy for Educational Development’s Research and Reference Services project, under contract to USAID/PPC/CDIE, and USAID/G/WID for supporting the participation of Stephanie McNulty and Andrea Allen respectively on the evaluation team.

We believe that, in addition to exploring successfully the questions posed in the Scope of Work, all team members benefited greatly from this unique opportunity to learn about the process of participatory evaluation. We hope that this effort will provide insight to development professionals working in the field of democracy and governance, as well as to those interested in the evaluation process.

## **Chapter III – BACKGROUND**

### **A. MOTIVATING FACTORS AND EVOLUTION OF THE IADN**

The five southern Founding Members of the Network met in the early 1990s during sessions of the Kettering Foundation's International Civil Society Exchange. The executive directors of four FMs (Poder Ciudadano, Conciencia, Participa, and UniAndes) began to discuss informally the utility of creating a regional consortium to promote citizen participation in the democratization process sweeping across Latin America. They agreed upon the importance of sharing the experience gained through work in their countries and their affiliation with the Kettering Foundation, through which they had gained knowledge of Kettering's deliberation methodology, which brings citizens together in National Issues Forums to discuss public policy issues.

Leaders of the four NGOs began to contact high-level USAID and Kettering officials, requesting consideration of funding options. Because Kettering is an operating foundation, funding from that source was not feasible. However, the Foundation did offer to continue defraying expenses associated with participation by the organizations in its two annual workshops and to provide assistance with materials and information. Some recalled that USAID expressed interest in supporting such a network, believing that other NGOs in Latin America could benefit from working with these high-profile organizations. Others recalled that USAID suggested the idea of a network to share knowledge with CSOs outside their countries.

Another important factor motivating USAID's interest was that its missions in Argentina and Chile were being closed, and direct grants to leading CSOs in those countries (i.e., Conciencia and Poder Ciudadano in Argentina and Participa in Chile) would no longer be possible. Thus, the regional approach being proposed was seen as a feasible way to continue providing funding, though at a reduced level.

During early conversations, USAID suggested that, because of the high priority being given by the Agency to Central America and the transition from war to peace, an organization from that region should be added to the group. For that reason, Kettering recommended that INIAP, with which the Foundation also had relations, be invited to participate in the discussions.

Originally, it was thought that one of the Latin American organizations would receive, administer and manage the grant. However, it became apparent that there was no agreement among them as to which one should assume this role. After considering various options, and in order to avoid delays and contracting complications, the USAID officer involved in the discussions suggested amending an existing regional grant to POA for a Citizen Participation Project to include administration of the Network. All parties finally agreed, and an unsolicited proposal was drafted, submitted to USAID/LAC, and approved.

## B. KEY ASPECTS OF THE USAID-POA COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

Since its initial approval in August 1993, this grant has been amended a number of times to incorporate significant changes affecting administrative as well as substantive aspects. Following is a brief description of the original agreement and the various revisions made to the grant, including provision of funds for the IADN.

**Phase I:** The original grant agreement provided \$1,251,184 and covered the five-year period between 1993 and 1998. It was awarded by the USAID/LAC Office of Democratic Initiatives in response to an unsolicited proposal submitted by POA in collaboration with Conciencia Argentina and the Organización Cívica Panamericana (OCP, a network of 13 Latin American civic education organizations spearheaded by Conciencia). The goal of the project was “*to promote democratic skills and increase citizen participation in civic organizations and agencies that promote open and free societies... realized through: 1) education in democracy and civic arts for young people and adults; and 2) the strengthening of civic organizations.*” In an addendum to the original proposal, a third item was added: “*strategies to increase women’s participation in public life,*” and in late 1994 \$171,000 from the USAID/WID Office was added to the grant. Originally, a total of \$1,256,327 in matching funds was to be contributed by POA. However, in February 1994, it was determined by USAID that the “Standard Provisions regarding Cost Sharing.... [were] not valid for the Citizen Participation Project Grant.”

Activities involved conducting regional and national needs assessments to develop baselines for measuring “democratic arts,” recruiting country teams, developing country plans, training, technical assistance, funding small projects, networking, and building civic education models. Both Conciencia and OCP were sub-contracted by POA for specific tasks, and a maximum of 20 POA chapters or partnerships were to be involved—each to receive support and funding for a minimum of two years and a maximum of five. These North–South partnerships were to “*work in collaboration with USAID missions for recommendations on the selection of participating civic organizations*” (an average of 3 from each partnership, or a total of 60).

**Phase II:** In April 1995, POA submitted to USAID/LAC a proposed amendment to the grant to enable Partners to work with five civic education organizations from Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Guatemala—Conciencia, Poder Ciudadano, Participa, Universidad de los Andes, and INIAP—“*to develop their capacity to provide technical assistance and training to civil society non-governmental organizations (NGOs) throughout the region.*” In response, through amendment 2, on September 29, 1995, the grant was extended to August 26, 2000, funding was increased to \$6,685,206, and the Program Description was revised. Thus, the **Inter-American Democracy Network** was born. This was to “*directly support the Summit of the Americas Plan of Action initiatives [and] also support AID’s New Partnership Initiative (NPI) through empowerment, building networks and strengthening democratic local governance.*” Other important provisions included:

- a) a “Strategy for Regional Impact” through which each of the five lead NGOs, “*under the management and coordination of Partners,*” was to provide information, training, and technical assistance (TA) to four targeted NGOs (total of 20) selected jointly by lead NGOs and POA, with each of the 20 receiving \$10,000 per year over three years for training costs and publications. In turn, those NGOs were to reach at least 60 more local organizations (three each) by transferring what they learned to other civil society organizations (CSOs) in their countries;
- b) the Kettering Foundation was to “*serve as a collaborator by providing guidance as well as resources to the five lead NGOs.*” Kettering would continue to sponsor participation by a representative from each of the five organizations in its two regular annual events and provide guidance to their efforts to promote its National Issues Forum (NIF) methodology on a regional basis;
- c) activities were to include: NIFs, civic education of youth, leadership training for youth and adults, citizen participation in the electoral process, government accountability and decentralization, and promotion of philanthropy; two sub-networks in civic education and philanthropy were to be formed;
- d) internal project monitoring and evaluation was to be on-going, while mid-term and final external evaluations were also to be conducted.

Amendment 3 of September 28, 1996 increased total funding to \$6,910,084 and provided for activities “*to support the start-up and organizational development of a newly established non-governmental organization in Guatemala called Acción Ciudadana,*” an NGO that promotes the participation of citizens in overseeing the performance of the Guatemalan Congress. Two types of assistance were to be provided: a) resources to carry out programs to monitor the legislative agenda and create opportunities for citizens to provide input on these issues, and b) technical assistance for organizational capacity building.\*

Amendment 4 of September 29, 1997 increased funding to \$7,082,323 and supported the development of “*linkages between Cuban NGOs and Community Organizations and Counterpart Institutions in the Americas.*”\*\* Attached to this amendment was a document dated June 30, 1997, which describes implementation to date of IADN activities and incorporates adjustments to the program to “*reflect a more complete description of the LAC Democracy Network, the vision and mission, and the increased possibilities of inter-institutional collaboration; update the evaluation schedule; and incorporate budget changes which resulted from a change in Partners’ NICRA.*” Noting that FMs had reached agreements with some 35 CSOs for 1997 (thus surpassing the target of 20) and that many were not yet capable of serving as multipliers and training others, the original two-tiered approach was modified so that all CSOs receiving training could become part of the Network. Thus, a more horizontal configuration was adopted, allowing FMs to work directly with any of the member CSOs, either as a mentor (with target CSOs receiving TA according to mutually developed plans) or as a provider of training opportunities and information. Three categories of membership were established:

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\* See **Annex E** for findings concerning *Acción Ciudadana*.

\*\* This activity was not included in the SOW for this evaluation.

Founding Members (POA and the five sub-grantee organizations); Associate Members (AMs)—CSOs targeted by FMs for training and TA; and Affiliate Members (Adherentes)—organizations that can receive information through the Network and participate in workshops but who neither make further commitments nor rely on IADN resources for follow-up work. (This third category has never been formalized.) A fourth category mentioned is Cooperating Member Organizations—institutions that possess particular expertise or interest in supporting the work of the Network (USAID and the Kettering Foundation are the only two mentioned). Lastly, it is noted that a final evaluation is considered to be sufficient and a mid-term evaluation unnecessary, given that IADN members and USAID representatives had met on seven occasions, which had allowed for review and course corrections during the initial start-up phase.

Amendment 5 of September 10, 1998 added \$100,000 for additional assistance to Acción Ciudadana, bringing the total budget to \$7,182,323.

### **C. ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES**

The grant's most recent budget breakdown for the full seven-year period shows a total of \$7,010,064 net of Cuba resources, of which \$3,131,502 (45 percent) is to be awarded by POA in the form of sub-grants to southern Founding Members, with \$1,419,805 (20 percent) for other program-related costs (workshops, outreach activities, civic projects, communication, materials, evaluation, audit, etc.), and \$2,458,757 (35 percent) for POA salaries, benefits, and indirect costs. If funds for Phase I and for Acción Ciudadana are deducted from the total grant, the amount remaining for Phase II IADN activities as of September 1995 is \$6,041,200.

Through CY 1999, each of the five Network sub-grantees was to receive approximately \$130,000 per year to implement IADN activities. POA has provided guidelines for the use of sub-grant funds, which cover personnel, program costs, administrative expenses, and small grants to selected Associate Members (see **Annex D** for financial information). For example, southern FMs may use approximately 40 percent to pay salaries, and up to 20 percent may be allocated for overhead costs. Annual plans, developed by FMs in November of each year are submitted to POA to inform budget decisions for the coming year. Support to selected AMs is included in FM plans and takes the form of training, technical assistance, and small grants.

In terms of personnel expenses, the grant covers full salary costs for four members of the POA staff, each with specific responsibilities. Other Founding Members have chosen to allocate salary funds in different ways. While some cover one or two staffers on a full-time basis, the majority have chosen to pay partial salaries to four or more professionals. As will be discussed later, this has implications for the institutionalization of Network activities and the sustainability of the positions covered in the event that no additional funding is obtained.

While the completion date of the grant is August 26, 2000, once current sub-grants terminate on December 31, 1999, there will not be sufficient resources to fund the

remaining period at the current level. Two years ago, a decision was made by all FMs to end activities in December 1999. Thus, funds available in 2000 are “extra” and not intended to be equivalent to prior years. The POA financial office estimates that approximately \$498,800 will remain for the final period. After deducting the current POA indirect rate of 27.1 percent, a total of approximately \$363,625 would be left for all other costs.



## Chapter IV – FINDINGS

This section presents the findings of the evaluation team with regard to the Inter-American Democracy Network (IADN). It is designed to respond to the questions concerning the Network posed in the Scope of Work.

### A. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

As described in the September 1997 amendment to the grant, the **Mission of IADN** is “*to establish a Network of organizations in the Americas dedicated to strengthening democracy and civic participation, through training, education, technical assistance, communication and sharing of resources.*” It is further stated that “*the Network will serve as a vehicle for both south–south and south–north cooperation among organizations promoting the development of civil society.*” Its activities are to be carried out in “*ways which reflect the democratic principles which its members advocate.*”

Each of the five southern FMs works in two to seven countries, which were agreed upon at the outset, based primarily on proximity. With regard to geographic focus, because Argentina and Chile had become USAID close-out countries, activities were not to be carried out there. This meant that three of the five southern FMs were barred from working in their own countries. Subsequently, this restriction has been relaxed; both Conciencia and Participa now conduct some IADN-funded activities in their own countries. At the end of 1998, Participa began a Program to Promote Social Responsibility in Chile, Bolivia, Paraguay, and Peru. In Chile, a working group was formed with representation from businesses, NGOs, and the state. Several meetings were held to design an 1999–2000 Action Plan, through which a Strategic Planning Workshop is to be held. In Argentina, Conciencia is involved in implementation of the United Nations model in schools throughout the country.

Southern FMs also agreed upon the five major activity components to be included in the grant. These were areas in which those organizations had come to specialize and therefore felt able to provide training and technical assistance to others. A sixth component (Institutional Development/Capacity Building) was added to strengthen the Network itself. A brief description of the six components follows:

- ◆ Deliberation: Following the Kettering methodology developed in the United States, this involves facilitated discussion of civic issues by citizen groups for the purpose of reaching a more thorough understanding of the complexity of public policy-making and improving skills for making group decisions.
- ◆ Citizen Participation at the Local Level: A process whereby local stakeholders (both public and private), acting individually or through their organizations, identify priority problems and propose local solutions and community initiatives, while participating in their development, implementation, and evaluation, resulting in a more equitable sharing of political power and greater awareness of social problems.

- ◆ Civic Education: Formal and informal education designed to train and empower citizens so that they may better understand their rights and duties and responsibly apply conceptual, technical, and participatory methods to more effectively act in that role. Thus, citizens are able to better understand political systems and to make use of existing institutions, thereby becoming active players in more sustainable democracies.
- ◆ Voter Education: A process by which citizens learn what they need to know in order to participate actively and conscientiously in the election of their political representatives.
- ◆ Social Responsibility: The mobilization of knowledge and skills, as well as human, economic, and material resources to deal with problems which affect societies as a whole and are in the interest of all citizens to resolve. Social responsibility requires the development of new attitudes and an understanding of what citizens can do about issues affecting sustainable development. (This is a broadening of the area of philanthropy, as called for in the grant agreement.)
- ◆ Institutional Strengthening/Capacity Building: Activities designed to strengthen the Network and member organizations.

Initially, there was disagreement among Founders as to whether deliberation should be a separate component or a cross-cutting methodology incorporated in other components. Those in favor of the latter option reported having lost the argument and, in the end, accepted deliberation as a discrete element. As discussed later, there is still a difference of opinion as to whether deliberation is an end in itself or a means to achieve more concrete results. As reflected in this evaluation, to date the major portion of the effort and resources made available through the Network have been dedicated to the deliberation component. The chart below shows the countries and major components in which each FM has worked.

<b>Founding Member</b>	<b>Countries Covered</b>	<b>Components</b>
Conciencia (Argentina)	Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay	Deliberation, Citizen Participation at the Local Level, Civic Education, Capacity Building
INIAP (Guatemala)	Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua	Deliberation
Participa (Chile)	Chile, Bolivia, Paraguay, Peru	Citizen Participation at the Local Level, Capacity Building, Social Responsibility
Poder Ciudadano (Argentina)	Ecuador, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Panama, Uruguay, Paraguay, Guatemala	Deliberation, Citizen Participation at the Local Level, Voter Education

UniAndes (Colombia)	Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela	Deliberation, Civic Education, Social Responsibility
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The Network seeks to accomplish its mission through training, technical assistance, and small grants by southern FMs to other organizations in the region, some of which enter into formal agreements with FMs, thus becoming Associate Members (AMs). Over 150 Latin American institutions, mainly NGOs, have participated in Network activities. In 1999, 77 of these were considered AMs by virtue of their close working relationship with a Founding Member. This is consistent with the original target of 80 IADN members, while the outreach to an additional 70 organizations far exceeds the initial project goals.

The small grants offered by FMs to target AMs are known as “complementary funds,” since amounts designated by FMs from their own annual budgets, if approved by POA, are “complemented” with roughly corresponding amounts from the “outreach” line item of the budget. This practice began in 1997 and was designed as an incentive for FM support of activities carried out by target AMs. As shown in **Annex D**, to date 30 such small grants have been awarded, totaling \$100,869 (\$45,409 from POA and \$55,460 from FMs). The purpose of these awards (also shown in the annex) has run the gamut from defraying meeting costs to training community promoters, strategic planning, promoting social responsibility, the publication of various books and papers, and so forth. While the AMs interviewed appreciated receiving this support, there was a strong sense that the amounts are too small (average is around \$3,000) to accomplish significant results. It was therefore recommended by a number of interviewees that serious consideration be given to increasing these grants—also linked to the “democratization” of the Network, as AMs feel they could play a more meaningful role. (The original idea of providing \$10,000 per year for three years to 20 “tier one” AMs so that they in turn could provide services to a second tier of 60 NGOs was abandoned with the 1997 amendment.)

## **B. PROCESS AND COORDINATION PRACTICES**

### **1. Relations Within the Network**

#### **Among Founding Members**

Interviewees involved in the early stage of the Network characterized that period as one of “getting-to-know-each-other.” The grant proposal stated that the role of Partners was to “assist the lead organizations in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the proposed activities.” In practice, lack of agreement has existed throughout the life of the project between Partners and some other FMs about whether POA should directly participate in program implementation and the degree of administrative oversight Partners should exercise. This created tension and resistance to POA guidance on the part of other FMs as they carried out activities they designed and frustration on the part of Partners as it carried out its management responsibilities as grantee.

Since POA had been invited to participate in the project after discussions between USAID and the other five FMs had already begun, some of the southern organizations expected that POA's role would be limited to administering funds. They explained that, because POA had not been part of the Kettering training cadre and since it had no experience with their methodologies, they did not see Partners as capable of playing a substantive role in program implementation under the Network. Furthermore, a number of FMs interviewed held that POA's administrative role had never been clearly defined. Particular confusion was expressed by southern FMs as to whether requirements communicated by POA are actually USAID mandates or are those of Partners itself. On the other hand, POA, having had years of experience as a USAID grantee, knew that it was legally responsible for both program management and funds administration. POA officials saw their role not only as administrative, but also as providing oversight of grant-funded activities and participating in those activities with the other FMs. As relationships evolved among FMs, Partners gradually accepted that its programmatic role would be limited to facilitating program planning among the other five FMs and carrying out occasional workshops.

With regard to administration of project funds, it took POA a while to stabilize its own grant-related staff; several early changes among grant managers occurred, each bringing different styles and expectations to the task. At the start of the project, USAID and POA assumed that the capacities of the other FMs in financial administration would be adequate to manage subgrants. As the project proceeded, Partners found that some of them needed to improve their financial control procedures. The project did not include funds for technical assistance in this area. Instead, during his periodic visits to each FM to review administration of subgrants, POA's Chief Financial Officer provided specific suggestions and advice for consideration by the FMs. In essence, Partners reports that it needed to spend more time on subgrant financial management issues than originally intended and in retrospect believes it would have been wise to budget funds that FMs could use to contract for TA in this area. Alternatively, POA explains that it could have used such funds to bring FM administrators together for several-day workshops on the financial aspects of their subgrants in order to overcome record-keeping and reporting problems.

Current relations among the six FMs were described by all as good. One FM noted, for example, that it was not easy for the FMs to initiate work together, and without Partners' positive intervention, it would have taken them much longer to coordinate their work. However, some discomfort lingers with regard to Partners' relationship with the subgrantees. A case in point was mentioned by various FM interviewees involving activities in Venezuela that were canceled by POA against the will of UniAndes. This caused other FMs to call for increased participation in Network decision-making. It was felt that this case raises key issues for the future of the Network, such as internal relations among founders, decision-making levels, and the need to periodically review information and administrative requirements. It also reflects the trade-off between the desire to increase participation in IADN decision-making and the responsibility to ensure that grant oversight requirements are fulfilled.

It was reported by most FMs that early tensions also resulted from a sense of competition among southern FMs, who knew one another but had never shared project responsibilities. Another view expressed was that, while it is true that initial relations among FMs were marked by working as individual organizations separate from one another, there was no sense of competition. As the Network took shape, FMs began to go about working in the countries they had targeted, with few activities carried out jointly. They followed the strategy outlined in the grant amendment, focusing on training target AMs to promote democracy. This evaluation suggests that the IADN has moved into a new phase in which the old strategy calling for FMs to target and nurture relations with AMs has outlived its usefulness. It was reported that, from the beginning, it has been difficult to coalesce the six FMs into a new entity, as originally envisioned by USAID. Indeed, southern FMs have remained relatively autonomous units, working in their respective areas. Two factors were suggested by interviewees to account for this. Some felt there was reluctance among Founders to learning from or sharing with one another, preferring instead to “do their own thing.” Others underscored the lack of opportunities for exchanges and information-sharing as a major weakness of the Network that deserves urgent attention. Most FMs interviewees held that, in reality, this is a “consortium,” rather than a true “network.” These comments appear to reflect the evolving demands of the participating organizations.

It was pointed out that, while the initial tendency was to work separately, over time FMs recognized the need to work in a more coordinated and integrated manner and have tried to overcome that initial tendency. Indeed, some cooperative efforts among FMs have been undertaken. For example, in June 1996, Conciencia and Poder Ciudadano co-sponsored a deliberation training workshop in Buenos Aires for existing or potential AMs, in which 20 NGOs from Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, Panama, Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador participated. This was also attended by representatives of POA/W and the Kettering Foundation. Another example was the publication in January 1998 by Participa of a manual on fund-raising for NGOs (part of the social responsibility component), for which UniAndes provided part of the text.

To support the relationship-building process, POA has convened at least two meetings per year, many in conjunction with other events that took place in Latin America. The purpose of these meetings has been to plan and coordinate programs and make Network development decisions.

After working together for four years, FMs report an increased level of communication among themselves; they now look upon the experience very favorably and are keen to consolidate the gains already made while strengthening the Network in the future.

### **Between Founders and Associates**

According to the IADN grant agreement, the criteria to be used by FMs when selecting AMs include:

- ✓ Capacity and commitment to serve as vehicles for regional outreach;
- ✓ Track record and potential to gain in one or more of the six key work areas;

- ✓ Voluntary commitment of a key staff person/organizational leader to the project as a participant in the regional network;
- ✓ Desire to reach a greater percentage of the public through citizen participation efforts; and
- ✓ Ability to monitor and evaluate the results of their citizen participation projects in order to develop model programs for replication.

FMs reported that those criteria were not always closely followed. Among AMs, track records, capacity to commit personnel, and ability to monitor and evaluate vary greatly. There is also a broad variance in terms of size, outreach capacity, and purpose.

In general, AMs vary in a number of ways. Annual budgets run anywhere from several thousand to several million dollars, while target populations range from grassroots groups to indigenous organizations, unions, youth, women, and municipal institutions and activities are undertaken in all USAID strategic sectors. As will be seen in subsequent sections of this report, the degree of assimilation by AMs of the methodologies provided by FMs also varies widely.

When selecting target AMs, Founders took different approaches. POA chapters and USAID missions were consulted in some but not all cases, as envisioned in the grant agreement. USAID missions were informed of selection decisions once they were made.

The following examples will provide a sense of how FMs went about recruiting AMs with which to work.

INIAP's approach was aimed at forming a cadre of AMs in target countries to create national chapters which together would form a Central American sub-network. Therefore, INIAP officials contacted organizations with which they had worked in those countries, requesting recommendations of other NGOs that met three criteria: 1) worked with women, children, or indigenous people; 2) represented different positions on the political spectrum; and 3) were interested in promoting citizen participation. In 1996, INIAP selected and trained three organizations in each of the four countries targeted in the deliberation methodology, forming national chapters. The following year, another three NGOs in each country were chosen and trained, based on recommendations from the first group. The second group was then to be integrated into the national chapters. Reportedly, this has met with mixed success, since in some countries there was resistance to the incorporation of new members into the group. Some from the second group reported that they still do not feel fully integrated into the national chapter.

Meanwhile, Participa worked with pre-existing national networks in Bolivia and Peru to identify NGOs that were interested in working with the IADN. The national networks then recommended organizations that were active in the area of citizen participation. In Paraguay, Participa initiated its first contacts with the POA Paraguay-Kansas chapter and other well-known NGOs to find a group of organizations that wanted to take advantage of Participa training and TA in the area of citizen participation at the local level or social responsibility. Often, the AMs targeted received assistance in both components over time.

Conciencia began work in Brazil through two organizations with which it had already established relationships: Organización Cívica Panamericana and POA/Brazil. It approached a number of organizations that were interested in promoting citizen participation and invited them to take part in various activities and discussions. They were offered the possibility of working with the Network in any of four areas: 1) deliberation, 2) civic education, 3) participation at the local level, and 4) capacity building. Conciencia ultimately worked first with ten “first-level” or direct AMs, which in turn transmitted methodologies to an “expansion group” of other associates.

To launch its IADN activities, in 1996 Fundación Poder Ciudadano held three workshops, inviting organizations with which it had worked or been in contact from some 13 countries of the region. These covered: a) deliberation; b) citizen participation at the local level; and c) voter education (candidate data bank) and served to identify organizations interested in working with the Network. This FM explained that, while they had been told about the need to focus on neighboring countries, when selecting AMs, priority was given to those organizations best able to replicate activities and not to geographic location. In 1997, the number of countries where Poder works was reduced to seven; the current list of AMs resulted from existing contacts and other organizations suggested by them.

With regard to relations between Founding and Associate Members, most interviewees reported strong, professional ties. FMs tend to see themselves as mentors, and almost all AMs described the training and technical assistance they had received as outstanding. However, some AMs felt that, while useful, FM assistance was not particularly meaningful in terms of their overall programs. Some explained that they do not feel part of the Network, nor do they know anything about it, except from the FM with which they are associated. Some interviewees failed to understand why their relationship with the Network should depend on a single Founder, stating they would prefer to relate to any IADN member working on the same issue or in countries closer to home. A number of AM interviewees maintained that the Network has not achieved the impact it could have had because of the lack of real linkages among the NGOs involved and the absence of follow-up by FMs after training and other activities. They also explained that, due to the vertical structure of the Network, the benefits they had received were due almost exclusively to their direct relationship with the FM, not with the larger Network. Meanwhile, the FMs also favored more horizontal relationships and expressed regret for their inability to provide follow-up, explaining that the main reason is the lack of the additional resources that would be required to do so.

There was also the perception that the two-tier membership structure is undemocratic and that all members should have some role in the decision-making process. A number of AMs commented on the “top-down” nature of Network’s approach, noting that FMs had contacted them and offered services, that it was never a relationship of horizontal learning and exchange. They asserted that, since they too have experience and expertise to offer, they should be incorporated as equals. One FM explained that, because performance was to be evaluated in accordance with the indicators established, they

never felt they could significantly alter the activities called for in the various components, though they did consult with AMs with regard to the particular focus of the trainings offered. Overall, FMs favor a change in Network structure.

In general, among AMs the level of knowledge about the Network and the degree of information-sharing were found to be very limited. For example, it was reported that two AMs in the same country did not know that the other was a member of the Network until they found out by coincidence, though they work together frequently on issues of common concern. Noting that members have no mandate to promote IADN visibility, one AM representative recommended that there should be a *Carta de Deberes* (Charter of Duties) for all members, including an obligation to disseminate information about the Network on a regular basis.

In summary, over time, the IADN appears to have evolved into a varied set of relationships among organizations with a shared interest in democracy-related themes. In Partners' opinion, up to now the IADN has sponsored a collection of TA/training programs carried out by individual FMs in a parallel fashion, rather than the creation of a network through which member organizations can take the initiative to share learning and work together on joint initiatives.

### **Between Founders, Associates and Cooperating Members**

Another membership category described in the grant agreement is that of "Cooperating Member Organizations." Mentioned are foundations, universities, training institutes, and donor organizations interested in supporting the Network. USAID and the Kettering Foundation are the organizations listed in this category.

As reported by USAID democracy officers, relations between POA and USAID/W (i.e., LAC/RSD) have been professional, efficient, and harmonious. Communication between the two offices has been fluid and continuous, despite frequent personnel shifts within the LAC Bureau—there have been five Program Officers to date. One former democracy officer noted that centralizing the grant's administration, including reporting mechanisms, made the grant manageable. POA relations with missions have also been positive, though infrequent.

Meanwhile, relations between other Founding Members and USAID have been limited and generally occurred at the mission level in countries where the Agency still works. Except in cases where FMs or AMs have previously established funding relations with missions, IADN members do not generally approach local missions. One exception relates to work in Bolivia, Peru, and Paraguay, where Participa reports that visits were sometimes paid to the USAID mission to discuss Network progress in their countries. One FM reported that in some countries it had been difficult to deepen relations with the mission because of resistance to regional programming and work with the Network. Overall, it was found that mission personnel had little or no knowledge of the Network, though they may have heard of certain members. Thus, opportunities for the discussion of mutual interests and potential funding options have been limited.



Some democracy officers in the missions expressed interest in learning more and working with the Network in their countries. It was suggested by a number of interviewees that USAID/W should play a more active role in facilitating communication and relations between Network members and mission personnel. Indeed, the USAID democracy officer who currently manages the LAC Bureau grant to Partners expressed a personal commitment to building such relations through increased communication with DG officers, notification of upcoming events, and so forth. Meanwhile, it was recommended that the Network encourage its members to make contact with USAID missions, keeping them up to date on plans and activities.

The Kettering Foundation plays a special role in the Network. The Foundation has working relationships with all FMs and a number of AMs and defines itself as a “friend of IADN—not a supporter or mentor.” International civil society fellowships lasting six months have been hosted by Kettering for Network organizations, increasing the knowledge of deliberation among the NGOs of the region. Fellows have been chosen with support by FMs. In addition, all southern FMs are invited to the annual International Civil Society Workshop in July and the Civil Society Exchange event in January—both in the United States. Through years of experience with National Issues Forums in the United States, Kettering developed the deliberation methodology that has been adapted by Network members and now permeates IADN activities.

### **Emergence of Sub-networks & New Alliances**

Several alliances and sub-networks have emerged as a result of Network activities. The most memorable examples found during this evaluation include:

- ✓ As described earlier, INIAP has worked to form national chapters bringing AMs together in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua and melding those chapters into a Central American sub-network dedicated to deliberation and citizen participation. Each chapter has worked on different activities, and the majority of organizations have incorporated deliberation into their own programs.
- ✓ In late 1998, Participa launched a regional “Program for the Promotion of Social Responsibility,” which involves the participation of entrepreneurs and other well-placed individuals from Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, and Peru. Objectives of the Program include the promotion of greater interaction between the community and the business sector within the framework of Social Responsibility at different levels.
- ✓ In Brazil, working through a “first level” of AMs, plus an “expansion group,” Conciencia has been able to bring together a number of NGOs and universities from various states (Sao Paulo, Rio Grande do Sul, and Parana) for the interchange of experiences and collaboration among the various organizations in an effort to increase citizen participation in local and national affairs. As a result of Network activities, Associate Member AMNPPA formed various alliances with key local institutions, including CSOs and business groups. Voto Consciente, Conciencia’s main counterpart AM in Sao Paulo, has formed a strategic alliance with the State Secretary of Education with the objective of developing curriculum and teacher training in civic

education. In August 1999, Conciencia launched an effort to integrate planning among the various Brazilian associates. Plans are also under consideration to expand activities to the northern part of the country, in collaboration with the Brazilian Federation of Partners of the Americas.

- ✓ In Colombia, UniAndes has created an alliance with the leading newspaper (El Tiempo) and the Corona Foundation in an initiative called *Educacion: Un Asunto de Todos*. Through a series of Citizen Interest Forums, regional Citizen Agendas on Education are being developed and published in the mass media. Also, gatherings with public authorities and the different sectors related to the education system are held in an effort to improve public policy in that sector.
- ✓ In Mexico, as a result of training by Fundación Poder Ciudadano in election-related subjects, a sub-network has been formed by *Alianza Cívica*, involving local affiliates in Chiapas and Coahuila, as well as the *Movimiento de Ciudadanos por la Democracia (MCD)*, the *Frente Cívico Familiar*, and others.
- ✓ Several IADN members are actively involved in and serve as national chapters (e.g., Argentina, Panama, and Ecuador) of Transparency International (TI), a global anti-corruption network, which also has a regional office. Thus, these organizations not only work together within the Network but also as members of TI.

## **2. Relations with Other Networks**

In light of modern technology and the explosion of CSOs in all parts of the globe, it was not surprising to find that IADN members maintain relations with a wide variety of other organizations and national and international networks. A number of IADN members reported affiliations with CIVITAS, a worldwide organization for civic education based in France, as well as with CIVICUS, which is based in the United States and dedicated to strengthening CSOs around the world. Indeed, to help build the Network, POA had used grant funds to support the participation of FMs at events held by both CIVITAS (Argentina) and CIVICUS (Hungary). Network organizations reported that the information provided and contacts made during those events were useful. No significant longer-term results were mentioned. Most FM interviewees attached greater significance to their affiliation with other networks dedicated to more specific issues or to Latin American affairs.

One FM is represented on the Board of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). Associate Members reported belonging to a variety of national, regional, and international networks, such as Business and Professional Women's Association, Soroptimist International, the Inter-American Human Rights Center, and a wide array of national networks dedicated to environmental, health, community development, and other sector-specific issues.

The head of one AM, who felt strongly that IADN's major deficiency is its failure to facilitate effectively and efficiently the exchange of information and materials among members, highly recommended the Latin America & Caribbean Civic Network of the

National Democratic Institute in Washington as a particularly good communications system.

### **3. Communication Mechanisms & Monitoring and Evaluation System**

Communication among Network members has occurred through both formal and informal mechanisms. As required by USAID, regular reports (quarterly and annual progress and financial reports sent to POA by each FM) are compiled by POA and transmitted to USAID and all FMs. And, as noted earlier, POA convenes FMs twice a year to discuss administrative and other matters. The June 1997 grant amendment notes that seven such meetings, which included the participation of USAID officials, had been held. In addition, two regional events have taken place for specific purposes in Costa Rica and Guatemala. Meanwhile, Network members use a mixture of e-mail and personal contact to stay in touch. Between meetings, FMs tend to rely on the Internet for most correspondence. They communicate with target AMs through e-mail, phone calls, and field visits. Regional meetings, seminars, and workshops are also used as occasional forums for gathering and disseminating information among AMs and FMs.

The IADN grant amendment specifies that communication among all members of the Network was to occur through a variety of mechanisms. First, the project would develop a database of “NGOs and individuals with special expertise in the region.” It would also “prepare and disseminate information regarding activities and training opportunities, and highlight model civic education programs.”

In Phase I of the grant, Conciencia and OCP conducted an inventory of 73 organizations that promote citizen participation in the hemisphere and published a resource directory with profiles of those organizations and materials they produced. Over 500 copies were distributed. The directory was also used to identify organizations with potential for working with the IADN during Phase II. An update of the resource directory, as mentioned in the 1995 amendment, was not done. POA explained that the emphasis had shifted toward IADN members, rather than the more general list of organizations. Also, a brief survey of computer capabilities in the region indicated that few organizations could receive it on diskette, which would have been the preferred form of distribution. Meanwhile, FMs felt an increasingly strong need for a mechanism to facilitate their access to information about IADN activities and to integrate AMs into the Network.

Later, to improve communication, and following discussion among FMs, Participa proposed the creation of a web page, which it had the capability and enthusiasm to develop. Thus, with the agreement of all concerned, in early 1999 Participa submitted a proposal to POA, arguing that, “after three years of work in the field, our Network has results and concrete accomplishments to show in each of our components, but there is no channel of mass communication to do so.” In response, POA awarded an additional sub-grant of some \$26,000 (from the “Outreach” line item) to Participa to overcome that problem. Thus, the web page was created [<http://www.redinter.org>] and went into operation by mid-year.

The web page houses general information about the IADN, its activities and the services offered, publications, and a database of contact information for Network members by category. It also includes an interactive users' area (links) for notices, articles, offers, and requests. We found that, while the existence of the web page is not yet known by all AMs, many do know about it. However, few reported having used it as a resource. In interviews, most AM representatives felt that the Internet should be used more strategically to disseminate information to and encourage dialogue among Network members.

With regard to monitoring and evaluation, the grant agreement states that evaluation “*will be an integral part of this project. Participant questionnaires and other techniques, such as interviews, reports, information from in-country sources and surveys, will be used to provide useful feedback. A system for tracking results will be developed and updated on an on-going basis, with feedback to AID through quarterly reports and annual reports.*”

Both USAID and the FMs recognized that measuring democracy programs is a challenging task. However, as one interviewee noted, they all agreed to learn together. The development of results-based objectives and appropriate indicators to monitor performance was taken very seriously by Partners. In effect, this system is the first of its kind.

In 1996, with the technical assistance of a specialist from Management Systems International (MSI), POA and the five southern FMs worked on developing a performance monitoring system designed to provide them with more comparable data about the outcome of IADN activities, while furnishing USAID with the information it required. First, objectives were identified for each of the six activity components. Then indicators were developed for monitoring both outputs and progress in meeting objectives. This was done in a highly participatory manner over a period of time, culminating in a workshop held in March 1997 with all FMs, during which they reached consensus on the objectives and indicators to be used. Data collection, in accordance with the results framework, began on July 1, 1997. Interview protocols and other instruments were drafted by FMs for information-collection purposes, based on the particular component to be monitored.

According to POA, Founding Members have regularly reported on their activities in their quarterly reports. These reports generally contain the basic process information, though it is not always presented in the formats developed. All but one of the FMs has attempted to collect impact data with AMs through follow-up surveys. However, in some cases, only a limited number of surveys have been completed. This has resulted in gaps in data which the program has struggled to overcome. Part of this is due to the fact that not all organizations trained became AMs. In the beginning, training was offered to a broad cross-section of organizations, and those that showed the most interest received further attention and follow-up. The monitoring and evaluation system does not distinguish between AMs and other organizations trained. The lack of an ongoing relationship with some of the organizations trained and the number of these (some FMs report having trained over 100 organizations) makes individual follow-up with each a time-consuming

task. In addition, while AMs are to report to FMs regularly regarding the status of the activities they are carrying out with FM assistance, they do not always carry through.

POA reports that, overall, FMs took the monitoring and evaluation tasks seriously, incorporating this into their work. In a number of cases, follow-up technical assistance visits were used to conduct impact surveys and staff were hired or deployed specifically for collecting data. Conciencia was particularly effective in training its AMs in the use of the monitoring and evaluation system; these AMs understood what information was expected from them and took responsibility for providing it. The experience of having created their own system (after rejecting the initial framework proposed in July 1996), strengthened the commitment and understanding of the FMs to the monitoring and evaluation process. Nearly all representatives of FM organizations reported that the IADN monitoring system had proven to be very helpful; some reported applying the principles learned here to other programs. In one case, the staff member responsible for evaluation has been motivated to seek additional training in this field. Only one organization found the system to be overly time-consuming, explaining that its own approach to monitoring is probably just as good. The value of having comparable data across the Network was, however, acknowledged.

To supplement the indicator framework, the FMs are developing a series of case studies to highlight significant achievements in particular component areas. Presently, there are four case studies, which have been disseminated and are available in English and Spanish on the IADN web page.

### **C. IMPACT/RESULTS**

During the evaluation design process, two levels of impact resulting from IADN activities were identified. One is the impact on member organizations as a result of their association with the Network. The second is the impact of Network activities on citizen participation in the region. It was agreed that the first level of impact is easier to identify and document, and in fact, most of the following data fall under this category.

It was also agreed that it would not be possible for the Team to collect data for the second level, the broader impact on society, given the evaluation's time and resource constraints. Because the IADN has, to date, focused on TA and training and since tracking impact on overall levels of citizen participation in the region is difficult, very little regarding this level of impact emerges in the evaluation.

Furthermore, data for this type of impact are not tracked by the Network's monitoring and evaluation system. Network members agreed from the outset that this type of information was beyond the scope of the system, and that broader, societal impact, when it did occur, could only be assessed in anecdotal form. Only in the area of deliberation are there indicators relating to impact on the population, and these are very rudimentary. It was determined that because the primary target of Network activities was Latin American NGOs, indicators would focus on the assimilation of methodologies learned through the Network by those organizations. Anecdotes concerning the results of the use of these new

methodologies on the NGO client population, submitted in “qualitative reports” and case studies, would then supplement the data. Thus, while many of the examples that follow suggest that citizen participation in the region has improved to some degree as a result of the Network, it is impossible to know to what extent.

While the SOW identifies the “impact” on various actors as an area of inquiry, interviewees were generally unable to assess true impact at this early stage. They could, however, speak of the results observed. Due to the breadth of the activities undertaken, it was not possible for the Team to comprehensively document all results in just three months. Team members traveled to the field to interview IADN participants and observe events that were taking place between June and August 1999 in order to get a better understanding of where the Network is at present. The Team took a “snapshot” of the Network at this time, a snapshot that could help inform the future as interviewees were encouraged to think critically about ways in which the Network could improve.

The anecdotal information gathered in the field is complemented by data from the Network’s monitoring and evaluation system.\* Partners noted that differences among FMs in interpretation and adherence to the system led to inconsistencies in the data. Adjustments to indicators, data collection instruments and procedures have been made all along in order to make the system more consistent across areas and to reflect the focus on NGOs as the primary target (or unit of measure). A shift from collecting aggregate numbers from FMs to inputting more detailed information entailed a significant increase in level of effort. The systems to manage this level of input are still being created. For these reasons, data in this report are not exhaustive but are as complete as can be provided at the moment.

The remainder of this section explores results at various levels and is designed to respond to the questions posed in the impact section of the SOW.

## **1. Overall Network Results**

FMs reported that their association with the Network has been a very fruitful experience and one that they would not have wanted to miss. The Associate Members contacted also felt that Network affiliation has been beneficial, though the degree of benefit perceived varied. While all AMs were clearly positive, in some cases there appeared to be an inverse relationship between the size and strength of the AM and the level of importance attached to participation in the Network. The following specific results were mentioned:

- ◆ Working with each other: The six FMs reported that, while it was difficult at first, they have succeeded in learning to work together. According to POA, this was accomplished by having frequent meetings, particularly in the first two years, and by working together on activities such as crafting the objectives and indicators for the

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\* According to POA, the indicators and data in the M&E system track numbers of NGOs trained by FMs, person-days of training conducted, whether the methodology learned is being put to use by trained NGOs, and the results achieved by those applying the methodology. As noted earlier, indicators were jointly developed by all FMs in March 1997, and data collection began in July. Process indicators are tracked quarterly, while impact information is collected annually.

program, developing a strategic vision and description of the Network and the Network's regional workshop on deliberation, in which each founding member played a part.\* They tend to see themselves as very different organizations working toward a common goal. IADN experience has also helped them learn to resolve problems collectively.

- ◆ New contacts & greater presence: FMs reported that the Network has allowed them to make new contacts and increase their visibility, both nationally and internationally. For southern FMs, the Network provided opportunities for them to work on a regular basis outside of their own countries, exposing them to new realities within which to test their methodologies and linking those lessons back to organizations at home. Some have used this experience to leverage additional resources or design other regional initiatives. For example, POA reported that Participa received separate funds to coordinate civil society positions and insert language on civil society into documents adopted during the November 1998 Summit of the Americas in Santiago. FMs actively participated in the pre-Summit process, taking a leadership role in drafting the recommendations for civil society and education. Participa also received a grant from USAID to assist civil society organizations to implement the recommendations. It was reported that lessons learned from that experience have been most useful when participating in other international forums and have opened doors to new supporters.

According to POA, other regional activities in which FMs participated on behalf of the Network include: the Kettering Foundation's annual International Civil Society Exchange, meetings of CIVICUS (March 1997 and September 1998), Civitas Panamericano (September 1996), the IberoAmerican Encounter for the Social Sector, and a pre-summit conference on civil society and Sustainable Development (August 1996). In November 1998, all FMs participated in a presentation about the Network to organizations interested in civil society located in Washington, DC. FMs have also made presentations about their work with the Network and have facilitated forums at POA conventions. In short, it was felt that the IADN has increased the recognition of its founders as players in the international civil society arena.

- ◆ Increased resource base: FMs reported that working with the IADN has increased their resource base and has helped some become more sustainable. This has been of less significance to AMs, as they have received only small amounts of funding. Indeed, some AMs emphasized that, in receiving assistance from the Network, they had to be willing to defray all overhead, administrative, and other costs from their regular budgets. Others indicated that they would not have been able to carry out IADN-sponsored activities without this assistance.

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\* FMs met at least twice a year to develop program plans and discuss implementation. In 1997 two additional meetings were held for strategic planning and evaluation purposes. In addition, FMs took advantage of their participation in regional civil society events (see below) to discuss Network issues, usually in a separate meeting prior to or following these events.

- ◆ Increased capabilities to carry out citizen participation activities: Without exception, FMs felt that their capacity to provide technical assistance and training to other CSOs has definitely increased as a result of their affiliation with the Network. Moreover, their capability to plan, implement, and evaluate civic participation activities was reported to have increased as a result of opportunities provided through the Network. The degree to which increased capacity has been institutionalized appears to vary among the FMs, accruing in some cases to individual staff members whose work is treated as a discrete, peripheral effort.

The capabilities of a number of AMs to provide assistance to other organizations has also increased, thanks to the Network—particularly through the use of deliberation. However, many reported that they have not yet had enough experience to continue this work without the ongoing support of the FM. Overall, AMs attributed any benefits accruing to them from IADN-sponsored activities to their relationship with the FM that recruited them, rather than to the Network as a whole. Indeed, a good number of them had no knowledge of the Network. As will be shown in subsequent paragraphs, the capacity of AMs to plan, implement, and evaluate civic participation initiatives has increased.

- ◆ Transfer & assimilation of methodologies: For AMs, there is substantial evidence that the methodology most highly assimilated is that of deliberation. That technique has been adapted in a variety of ways and has also been incorporated by many AMs into their other programs. Other methodologies transferred from FMs to AMs have included those related to fund-raising, relations among municipal government, NGOs and community groups at the local level, and so forth. With regard to FMs, there were few reports of methodological transfers through the Network. As discussed previously, these organizations continue to work in the component areas they chose at the outset. One example of successful sharing was reported to be the transfer of electoral database methods from Poder Ciudadano to UniAndes, resulting in a project titled “Visible Candidates” which related to Colombian Congressional candidates and later to those running for president.
- ◆ Institutional Strengthening: AMs that had participated in IADN-sponsored institutional strengthening activities reported results within their organizations in areas including organizational restructuring, development of new fundraising strategies, and enrichment of their institutional vision. Often, the introduction of a new methodology allowed institutions to develop new areas of expertise and forge new alliances. Examples of this result are noted in the next section.

Before examining activities by component, it should be noted that it is not possible to respond to two questions posed in the SOW regarding gender and impact. For example, no quantitative data were available concerning the “grant’s impact on increasing women’s participation in public life.” However, it appears clear that there is a high degree of participation by women in Network activities. While the information provided by FMs for inclusion in the POA database is disaggregated by sex, age, and so forth, the



lack of post-intervention follow-up makes it impossible to track longer-term impact. For the same reason, it is not possible to quantitatively assess how “the individuals and organizations participating in activities carried out by Associate Members [are] using the knowledge that they acquire.”

However, qualitative information collected during the course of the evaluation does suggest that such results have indeed been obtained in a number of cases and that women and men are using the knowledge they acquire. For example, in Central America the AMs interviewed reported having developed an internal capacity to master the deliberation methodology and that often the majority of those trained were women. Results for several of the organizations include:

- Groups of union women trained in deliberation. This has helped them to integrate effectively in the union at large by giving them skills to communicate their opinions and participate in the decision-making process.
- Women members of organizations using the deliberation methodology choose the themes on which they will deliberate in a given community, and they then develop action plans. Specific results include advocacy at the municipal level to provide gynecological exams through the community health clinic. As a result, free exams have been provided to 180 women to date. Another example is a community strategy to manage waste, which included design of better dump sites, street cleaning, etc.
- One AM provides legal training for women *promotoras* on a regular basis, using deliberation. They then return to their communities, using the method along with other skills, to highlight issues relating to family violence and other human rights concerns. As a result, both organizations and individuals are strengthened/trained.

In Brazil, while some AMs interviewed said that their programs affected men and women equally, others noted special impact on women. An AM involved in deliberation forums in Parana reported that, while more men than women attended their forums, women seemed to become especially sensitized to the issues dealt with and were more involved than men in follow-up actions after the forums. For many, this was their first experience with citizen participation. A number of the AMs in Brazil are groups of women volunteers (Voto Consciente, Soroptimist chapters, AMNPPA), so that the increases in personal and institutional capacity as a result of Network activities there are particularly concentrated among women.

## **2. Results by Component**

To examine the results of Network activities as related to the overall goal of increased citizen participation, this section looks at the six component areas in which those activities have taken place. The Results Framework developed by FMs, including performance indicators, may be found in **Annex F**. Since it is not possible to transmit all of the anecdotal material collected by the evaluation team, the most illustrative examples are presented.

The data available from the POA database for each component are presented first, followed by examples of data gathered in the field during the evaluation team’s visits.

**a. Deliberation**

As noted earlier, to date the majority of IADN activities and resources have been dedicated to this component. Four of the FMs worked in this area, transferring knowledge of the deliberation methodology to AMs across the region. However, because FMs employed different approaches and because conditions differ from one country to another, the results of this transfer are varied.

**Objective A: Greater use of the practice of deliberation**

The most complete information in the database relates to this objective. Four FMs held over 35 workshops to train NGOs to conduct forums. Thirty-eight NGOs have held 258 forums, attended by 6,603 participants, 63 percent of whom were women and 62 percent were youth (age 25 or younger). A total of 75 forums (29 percent) were conducted without any technical or financial assistance from an FM, indicating a good level of institutionalization of the forum process.

Thirty-six issue guides (short documents which guide the process of deliberation) have been developed on the following topics: Citizen Participation, Corruption, Democracy, Women's Rights, Children's Rights, Education, Poverty, the role of Government, Public Safety, Environment, AIDS, Youth and Participation, and Drug Abuse. In numerous cases, the deliberative process was adapted for facilitating community or institutional meetings, without the use of a pre-printed guide.

A regional workshop on deliberation was held in April 1999 to provide opportunities for FMs and AMs to exchange materials, approaches, and experiences beyond their normal working groups; each of the FMs participated in organizing and facilitating the workshop.

**Objective B: Citizens have a better understanding of the complexity of public policy issues**

Data for this objective have been hard to collect and systematize for a number of reasons. First, because four FMs are working in deliberation, they have had to modify pre- and post-forum questionnaires to reflect the different contexts in which they work. Thus, there is no standard form, and the responses are hard to compare and aggregate. Second, some FMs have had difficulty obtaining this information because, in some cases, participants are illiterate.

**Central America**

INIAP trained some 22 CSOs in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua, working with each organization separately to train personnel in the deliberation methodology, while facilitating efforts to develop country-level chapters and, later, a sub-

network of Central American AMs. For that reason, interviewees who had worked with INIAP referred to results at the organizational, chapter, and sub-network levels.

AM representatives expressed an appreciation for the basic principles on which the methodology is based. They argued that deliberation opens participants to other opinions and promotes dialogue and that participants leave deliberation forums with increased knowledge of the issue treated and a new respect for different opinions. They felt that these are particularly important values to instill in the war-torn countries of the region. However, a number of AMs referred to the “rigidity” of the methodology and the need to adapt it. They also felt that deliberation should be used as one of many methodologies, as part of a process to solve concrete problems or lead to action, holding that, since deliberation alone does not lead to action, this is a serious weakness. Many AMs noted this problem, reporting that the question always is, “*Despues del foro, que?*” (After the forum, what’s next?)

To address this, nearly all organizations reported having incorporated deliberation to some degree into their regular programs. In addition to increasing the potential for post-forum action, this has resulted in the institutionalization of the methodology and its more sustainable use. This, combined with the work AMs did together as a chapter resulted in a number of significant achievements in promoting citizen participation. Specific examples include:

In Nicaragua -

- Three AMs, *Grupo Fundemos*, *Hagamos Democracia*, and *CED*, worked together to train facilitators from other CSOs, using the methodology throughout the country to obtain citizens’ views on post-hurricane Mitch reconstruction priorities. These were then presented to the GON and at the Consultative Group meeting in Stockholm.
- *Hagamos Democracia*, which works with representatives of local and national government, citizens, and civil society, used deliberation at the community level to define priority issues to present to local officials. Fifteen promoters were trained as moderators in each department of the country, and they are now training others. These moderators are tapping into already-existing community networks to achieve a multiplier effect.
- *CDC*, another AM, provided legal training for women *promotoras* on a regular basis using deliberation. These women then returned to their communities, where they apply this and other skills to highlight issues relating to family violence and other human rights concerns. CDC also combines deliberation with mediation to resolve community disputes. It has used deliberation to organize groups in over 40 municipalities to focus on youth issues and define program priorities.
- *CENIDH* uses deliberation to prepare *promotores/as* in the area of municipal, constitutional, and human rights law. Participants have included *alcaldes*, *consejales*, *policia*, military personnel, Ministry of Education officials, and various CSOs. As a result of deliberation, they have reached agreement on plans to increase communication between citizens and authorities, a campaign to motivate citizen participation, solicitation of information from authorities, and efforts to coordinate with police to reduce delinquency.

#### In Guatemala -

- AMs used deliberation to begin general discussions on public policy issues that relate to children's rights. This helped them encourage participants to overcome the culture of fear that permeates the country.
- One organization, *ADEJUC*, has trained 65 people to moderate deliberative forums.
- Deliberation has helped some AMs promote advocacy for the passage of a legal code for children and youth (*código de la niñez y juventud*).

#### In El Salvador -

- One AM worked with students from around the country, who elected representatives to form the National Youth Council. Through deliberation, their opinions on issues facing Salvadoran youth have been documented in a position paper to be presented to the National Assembly.
- The work of AMs with teenage gangs appears to indicate that they have discovered the value of participation in the life of their community via deliberation and are now less afraid to speak in public settings. It was felt that this may actually contribute to lowering the incidence of gang violence, as such participation seems to serve as a substitute by allowing teens to explore problems and help find alternative solutions.
- The El Salvador chapter is helping the municipality of Soyapango train local authorities to use the deliberation method when solving community problems. They have adapted the methodology to allow those who cannot read or write to participate in the trainings.
- ISD and ACJ have worked with students throughout the country. One of these efforts has been the election of representatives to form the National Youth Council. Through deliberation, opinions about the problems faced by Salvadoran youth have been documented, along with their position on the issue. This document is to be presented to the National Assembly.

#### In Honduras -

- Deliberation was used in a *barrio marginal* in Tegucigalpa with community associations working on water, health, education, and other issues to analyze existing problems (e.g., the need for a potable water system) and then determine follow-up actions (e.g., meeting with the *alcaldia municipal*). These forums were carried out without issue guides, as many of the older participants were not able to read. Similar activities are being carried out in six municipalities.
- *CDH*, working with and without issue guides, used deliberation in their activities with rural and urban unions to choose a course of action for responding to post-Mitch reconstruction and deciding how to relate to political parties. They also use and teach deliberation in their programs for training young leaders.
- A person who works with *COCOCH* (an AM) conducts forums within the member organization to which she belongs, *Unión de Mujeres Campesinas Hondureñas (UNCAH)*, to address issues related to health, the environment, and AIDS prevention. Members choose the themes about which they will deliberate in a given community, then they develop action plans. Specific results include, for instance, advocacy at the municipal level to provide gynecological exams—provided to 180 women to date.

Another example is a community strategy to manage waste, which included design of better dump sites, street cleaning, and so forth.

In addition to the results documented during field visits to AM organizations, INIAP has reported that the AMs in Central America completed the following activities. In Nicaragua, *Asociación de Mujeres Nicaragüenses “Conciencia”* passes along the methodology to low-income clients. In Guatemala, *CONANI* is using the methodology to help young educators teach at the community level. Another AM, *PAMI*, has adapted the method to use in training programs with a number of organizations that work with youth. *IGESP* and *APJU* work with youth groups and other CSOs around the country to host FICs. *Mujer y Vida* has incorporated deliberation into its programs supporting rural women and the peace accords. *Fundación Agropecuaria de Guatemala (Fundación Uleu)* uses deliberation to work with non-Spanish speaking indigenous people about citizen participation. They have adapted the Spanish issue guides to relate specifically to this community. In El Salvador, *Fundación Guillermo Manuel Ungo (Fundaungo)* has used deliberation extensively to increase citizen participation at the local level.

The Central American National Chapters & Regional Sub-Network: The AMs that comprise national chapters are expected jointly to plan and conduct several deliberative forums per year on issues of importance in their countries. For that purpose, AMs reported that INIAP provides approximately \$250 per forum as small grants to help defray expenses.

A number of AM interviewees considered that the process of forming a national chapter is a result in and of itself, stressing that coordinating efforts among organizations is often time-consuming and difficult. Interviewees noted that working with the chapters demands a high level of personal commitment, as the responsibilities often fall outside of their organizations' priorities. Learning to work together proved to be a valuable experience for most Central American AMs. The amount of time, effort, coordination, and communication that goes into a guide, forum, and the work plans of each chapter reinforce the processes of coordination and respect—all important characteristics of a democratic society. This process may also be considered a result, especially in a country where civil society is so fragmented and disarticulated.

The results are especially interesting when viewed within the context of the FM's strategy and the region's history. INIAP purposefully chose organizations that represented different poles in the political spectrum working in the same issue areas (women, youth, and indigenous). After working together as a chapter and using deliberative methods, many new alliances were formed. For example, in one case, two organizations that would never have worked together in the past are drawing up proposals for new activities as a partnership. This is especially significant given the past of violent and politicized conflict in the region (which is still present in society).

For example, working together as a chapter, Honduran AMs learned to utilize and adapt the deliberation methodology, identifying problems and solutions when writing two issue guides. In Nicaragua, working as a chapter allowed AMs to strengthen relationships and

maintain communication; address national issues, including citizen participation in post-Mitch reconstruction efforts; and form a network of cooperating organizations, which they feel will prove useful for future fund-raising, as networks or consortia seem to be a priority among donors.

Efforts to meld national chapters into a regional sub-network include an annual meeting of member organizations. These sessions have allowed AMs to learn more about the issues facing other Central American CSOs. By sharing experiences, they have also learned that they have issues in common. No institutional strengthening or other special efforts to build the sub-network were reported, as these were not provided for in the sub-grant. The strong perception among interviewees was that the Central American sub-network appears to be continuing development of a common vision based on the experiences of its members. However, it is as yet very weak.

### **Brazil**

Conciencia worked with a group of six AMs from three states in Brazil, providing training in the use of deliberation. In turn, those AMs trained an “expansion group” of seven additional organizations. The “first level” or direct associates have demonstrated substantial capability in carrying out forums on their own, though they continue to receive assistance from Conciencia in areas such as designing issue guides on new topics.

The extent to which they have successfully assimilated the practice of deliberation is demonstrated by their ability to act as “multipliers,” transferring the methodology to other organizations. The quality of the deliberation “product” of the Brazilian associates is evidenced by the growing demand for forums from diverse entities in the regions where they work. For example, in the case of *Voto Consciente*, the demand for forums has surpassed the organization’s capacity to conduct them. Among other requests, the State Secretariat of Education of Sao Paulo recently asked that they perform 100 forums as a regular feature of its new weekend school program aimed at keeping children and youth off the streets.

There was also considerable evidence that associates from the “expansion group” are building capacity in deliberation. In most cases, the members of the expansion group receive assistance from AMs in carrying out forums. For example, the *Soroptimistas* of Catanduva are newcomers to the Network, having organized their first forum in May 1999. As a result of a “tumultuous” forum on citizen security, the Soroptimistas were invited to help form a local security council (Conseg) and received requests from local officials to do a forum on drugs in another neighborhood.

The vast majority of the associates interviewed reported that acquiring deliberation skills had been a valuable contribution to their work, particularly as a mechanism for putting their organizations in contact with the community. Most of the organizations interviewed had not used any similar tool prior to involvement with the Network, although some had experience with other types of forums. The Brazilian associates involved in deliberation forums, as a practice, try to lead forum participants to identify follow-on actions to

address the issues that have been raised. However, some of the associates that perform large numbers of forums, while reporting information concerning the forums themselves, do not regularly collect data regarding follow-on actions.

In cases of organizations that have created longer-term relationships with communities where forums are held (e.g., the Rio Grande do Sul “subnetwork” and the State Universities in Parana), they were able to report a number of results which grew out of deliberation forums. Some examples follow.

- As a result of a forum in the municipality of Nova Harz, citizens identified the institution of a participatory budget process (already a tradition in the state capital of Porto Alegre) as one of the concrete actions they wanted to pursue. City councilmen agreed to institute the process. Representatives of AMs did intensive follow-up work with the municipality to implement the process. The associate from AGAPAN who was most involved in the follow-up actions observed that creating this level of impact is very time-consuming.
- As the result of another forum, citizens in a community in Rio Grande do Sul organized to petition the secretary of public works for a sewage system which, as they requested, was put in place by the municipality.
- Other forums in Parana have led to the creation of community councils on health and education to lobby municipal officials on priority issues. One group succeeded in preventing a particularly effective school principal from being moved to another area. A mother’s club and other groups convinced city officials to create a public competition to qualify teacher candidates.
- The State Universities of Ponta Grossa and Londrina have used the deliberation methodology and materials designed by Kettering, while adapting them to their community extension program.

## Colombia

In 1997, UniAndes began working with the Urban Journalism program of the *Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana* of Medellín, carrying out an activity called *Periodismo Cívico* (Civic Journalism). First was a project called *Voces Ciudadanas por la Seguridad y la Convivencia*, which through a series of deliberative *Foros de Interés Ciudadano* (FICs) resulted in a citizens’ agenda on the issue of security. Again with FICs as a core approach, in 1998 UniAndes, El Tiempo newspaper, and the Fundación Corona joined together in an effort to put the issue of education on the national agenda.

This initiative, called *Educación: un Asunto de Todos*, is to be carried out in selected regions of the country. The project was launched with a number of FICs in Bogotá, in which various sectors of the citizenry participated. The issue guide had been developed with guidance from a panel of seven experts/advisors (two women, five men) in the field of education, convened to provide a basis for development (through FICs) of a “Citizens’ Agenda on Education” and to help UniAndes compile results. This produced a document that was then presented as the Agenda (i.e., citizens’ voice). In May 1998 (before presidential elections), El Tiempo published an entire supplement on the subject of

education, with answers from candidates to questions about the quality, management, and financing of education. In March 1999, the paper published a special section on the subject.

Through a second agreement with El Tiempo and Corona, the project is to be expanded, now focusing on higher education through Regional Agendas being developed in el Valle, Cundinamarca, and Antioquía (four FICs in each region), subsequently presenting them to local and regional authorities, though UniAndes explained that they do not have the capacity to provide follow-up to learn if participants have been affected by the experience. These FICs are held in cooperation with local/regional entities identified by UniAndes.

### **Ecuador**

With assistance from UniAndes, AM *Fundación Esquel* (FE) has been carrying out a two-pronged initiative based on the use of FICs to explore the “Role of the Education Community in the Fight against Corruption” with children in schools run by the municipality of Quito. This includes: a) FICs in the schools and b) workshops to train teachers from Quito and Guayaquil as FIC moderators. FE interviewees explained that, because FICs with unarticulated groups do not usually lead to concrete results, they decided to shift their focus to schools, where students stay in touch with each other, making follow-up action much more feasible. Approximately \$27,000 is being provided for the anti-corruption campaign described here. This amount is provided in the form of a grant from the UniAndes annual budget, but this is a unique case in that it is administered directly by POA/W, rather than by the FM.\*

### **Panama, Uruguay, & Paraguay**

Fundación Poder Ciudadano has worked with organizations in each of these countries: *Fundación para el Desarrollo de la Libertad Ciudadana* (Panama), *Asociación Encuentro* (Uruguay), and *Decidamos* (Paraguay). It was reported that the deliberation methodology has been assimilated by the three AMs, which received initial training in 1996 during a workshop held jointly by Poder Ciudadano and Conciencia. Poder Ciudadano reports that the three AMs have acted as “multipliers,” training new moderators, and have also produced their own discussion guides on the subject of corruption for the forums held. Representatives of Poder Ciudadano affirm that the exchange with these organizations has contributed greatly to their own work in the area of deliberation, as they have adapted the methodology to fit national environments, making changes in the format, pre/post evaluation, and so forth. As an example of positive results, the FM reports that, in 1998, following a forum on corruption organized by *Decidamos* in the city of Caaguazú, Paraguay, a citizens’ organization was formed, and a *Contraloría Ciudadana* was created. The objective chosen for the first year was to

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\* Last year, through a special arrangement with UniAndes, FE began to handle all financial transactions and reporting directly with POA. This was done to overcome the burdensome administrative bureaucracy at the university and the resultant untimely delays. However, FE continues to submit activity reports to UniAndes.



inform and motivate citizens to monitor the administration of public funds by the municipality.

Another example reported by Poder Ciudadano involves *Encuentro in Uruguay*. After holding various forums on squatter settlements, that AM began to receive requests for forums and materials, and *Encuentro* members have been invited to participate in different seminars and panels, using deliberation methodology jointly with other civil society organizations.

In Panama, the *Fundación para el Desarrollo de la Libertad Ciudadana*, which is the national chapter of Transparency International, held numerous forums on the subject of corruption in 1998/1999. These were aimed at engaging community members and high school and college students in discussions about how corruption affects their daily lives. This AM reported that there have been “spin-off” activities from the forums, including publication of articles on corruption and a generalized increase in attention to the subject. Fundación staff believe that their intensified focus on corruption, which included both the forums and presentation of proposals on the topic to candidates in Panama’s May 1999 presidential elections, contributed to the fact that all three of the major candidates included anti-corruption as a theme in their platforms.

General findings concerning deliberation: As noted, the application of the deliberative methodology was found to vary widely from one FM to another and between countries. During the forums observed, evaluators also found great differences in the way agendas were structured and in the specific techniques employed. Differences were noted, for example, in the role of the moderator, facilitation techniques, the synthesis of the opinions expressed, the approach to closure, the clarity with which the purpose of the event and the norms to be observed were described, and so forth. In one case, following impressions offered by the evaluation team, the sponsoring FM expressed an interest in a more in-depth discussion of advances in the field of organization development and how they might strengthen the forum process. Since deliberation has been such a major focus in many countries, the image of the Network and its impact over time will be closely affected by those differences. Moreover, the Network is now in a position to provide substantial feedback to the Kettering Foundation and others concerning the various uses of the methodology and the results obtained.

**b. Citizen Participation at the Local Level**

**Objective A: Trained NGOs increase their participation in community initiatives, the development of public policies, and the monitoring of government action at local levels.**

This objective has been pursued solely by Poder Ciudadano, which conducted three international workshops between 1996 and 1998. About one-third of the organizations trained became AMs and received further in-country training. Citizen efforts to monitor government and encourage transparency have begun in those countries. Some of the work that Poder conducts in the areas of deliberation

and voter education overlap with this area, such as forums on the topic of corruption and the use of databases to monitor government (similar to the use of databases to provide voter information).

**Objective B: Various sectors increase their interaction for the purpose of identifying and resolving local problems.**

Conciencia and Participa initiated activities to work toward this objective. Information available in the database indicates that 25 NGOs, community groups, and municipalities were trained to use a variety of methods to promote citizen participation. Ten projects, ongoing and completed, that involve two or more organizations or municipal representatives have resulted from these trainings.

With regard to Objective A, Poder Ciudadano reported that the issue of citizen participation in local government has been approached from different angles. Trainings have been conducted in such areas as parliamentary transparency, alternative ways to access information, and citizen monitoring. Poder's first workshop on citizen monitoring of the public sector was held in 1996 with some 13 organizations from the region. Based on their subsequent experience, Poder edited a book exploring six cases in various countries, including two from Argentina. The book was distributed mainly to AMs within the Network. In 1997, in conjunction with Transparency International, Poder convened the same organizations for a workshop on use of the database for citizen monitoring of social expenditures. After these two workshops, Poder began to follow up with certain organizations. Thus, in 1998, Poder held on-site trainings on parliamentary transparency in **Guatemala** (*Acción Ciudadana*) and **Mexico** (*ANCIFEM* and *Alianza Cívica*). In early 1999, training was also conducted in the **Dominican Republic** with an NGO that had participated in the 1996/97 workshops (*Participación Ciudadana*). In each case, agreements were signed with Poder, making those organizations AMs. In response to a need identified during this process, in early 1999 Poder published a manual for volunteers, to which ANCIFEM contributed a chapter on how they carry out the program. Poder reports that, of the thirteen original organizations, eight continue to work with the parliamentary transparency methodology. The **Panamanian** AM (*Fundación para el Desarrollo de la Libertad Ciudadana*) that participated in the December 1997 Poder workshop on citizen monitoring of local government has not yet had time to implement the practices learned. They plan to apply them in a project to monitor public agency purchases, together with the *Contraloría*.

In addition to training and TA, Poder Ciudadano reported that, in late 1998, a study tour (*pasantía*) was arranged for a person from *Acción Ciudadana* in **Guatemala** to visit Poder's operations in Argentina. Also, to facilitate an exchange of experience among organizations working in this field, Poder held the First Regional Meeting on Participation and Monitoring of the Public Sector by Civil Society. The session was held in Guatemala and emphasized work with volunteers. It was based on assessments of the situation in each country *vis-a-vis* politicians, citizens, and institutions.

In pursuit of Objective B, Participa trained AMs in methodologies to increase citizen participation at the local level in **Bolivia, Paraguay, and Peru**. They followed a three-step training process, with representatives from NGOs, municipalities, and community groups: a) basic training session; b) a *pasantia* in Chile (where local projects were designed); and c) a follow-up visit to help implement the project. In a survey during their 1998 follow-up visit to each of the countries, Participa found that six of the seven participants indicated that interaction between local governments and civil society organizations had improved. In addition, Participa provided Complementary Funds to some AMs in these countries.

**Bolivia:** Most AMs mentioned that the assistance offered by Participa had motivated them to continue a process they had already initiated. They explained that the relationship had begun at an “opportune moment.” The *pasantias*, or visits to Chile, provided by Participa had helped them learn about the Chilean democratization experience and meet other organizations from Peru and Paraguay. Workshops on the topics such as the relationship between the State and civil society helped participants reflect on and analyze their views about the issues treated—a luxury, given the hectic schedules of these NGO professionals.

For instance, *CIPCA* personnel said that Participa workshops had taught them methods for promoting participatory planning, project development, and implementation in the municipalities in which they work. They cited as a key to success the fact that Participa had provided for municipal authorities to accompany them on trips outside Bolivia. Later, the trust *CIPCA* enjoyed with municipal leaders permitted them to support implementation of the Popular Participation Law.

**Paraguay:** In 1997, a visit was made by Paraguayan NGOs to Chilean municipalities where Participa has worked. The majority of interviewees from local AMs cited the high quality of Participa seminars, *pasantías*, and materials. However, evaluators also heard a common criticism from the majority of organizations visited: that there was little follow-up support or communication by Participa once the seminars and other events were over. Many felt that this limits the possibility for lasting impact from Participa’s assistance.

As an example, *BASE-Ecta* reported that participation in a Participa seminar had coincided with their efforts to take a more integrated approach to their work in San Joaquin, including the municipal government. With Participa’s assistance, they developed three training courses for municipal authorities. They also carried out a diagnostic with institutions in the district, which identified substantial problems in health, education, and security. This diagnostic marked the first time that the different institutions had begun to dialogue. Together they started to identify issues and try to resolve them. However, lack of funds and time on the part of some authorities made subsequent work difficult. Follow-up, which was to have included technical assistance by Participa, remains pending until these difficulties are overcome.

Another organization, *CIRD*, reported that the quality of the events organized by Participa and the materials used were very professional and that the approach was

systematic and organized. What was missing, they felt, was their adaptation to the reality of the participants—sometimes very subtle nuances. They were disappointed with the “packaged” approach and the fact that the program areas were already defined, with little opportunity for participant input. This group also commented on their disappointment at the lack of follow-through from Participa, explaining they came to produce an event and then left.

In **Uruguay**, Conciencia worked with a national AM, training affiliates in three rural communities. Here Conciencia worked with AM *Fundación Mujer y Familia Rural (FMFR)*, a volunteer-based NGO with affiliates around the country. This AM seeks to motivate rural women to recognize/utilize their own knowledge and experience for their own benefit and that of their communities, especially youth. Applying the inter-sectoral, participatory methodology developed prior to the Network (*Interacción para un Proyecto*), Conciencia provided training and TA for affiliates in Artilleros, Cardona, and Carmen. This is a process that includes a number of workshops with representative sectors and follow-up guidance as trainees carry out subsequent activities.

As a result, to date each of the three groups had identified community needs, prioritized them, formulated plans to satisfying those needs, and launched project activities. This has included successful efforts to win support from local authorities for initiatives such as the construction of a community center (land and labor were donated), opening by the municipality of a new road to a formerly inaccessible area, and so forth. Fundraising approaches have included targeted contacts, a mass media campaign, special “fairs,” and other events.

For this evaluation, a day-long workshop was held with the participation of 17 (11 women, 6 men) top FMFR leaders and representatives of the three communities to learn their perceptions of the assistance provided. Each group was asked to prepare a brief presentation on how the project idea got started, resources needed to sustain the effort, difficulties, enabling forces, number of people involved, errors, and lessons learned. Although this was the first time the three communities had met together to exchange information about their projects, thanks to the enthusiasm and energy generated, it also served to persuade FMFR that this initiative should be expanded to affiliates in other communities.

With regard to relations with Conciencia, participants felt that identification with a “foreign” (i.e., not Uruguayan) partner had helped to give the Foundation an international image. Words used to describe the assistance received included: motivating, dynamic, professional, reinforcing, sensitive, etc. They praised the quality of Conciencia-conducted workshops and *pasantías* (trainings in Argentina) and the fact that Conciencia had followed up even when problems had arisen along the way. Speaking about the larger IADN, most participants had very little knowledge of it. Those who did perceived a lack of “horizontal mobility” within the Network.

**c. Civic Education**

**Objective A: Civic educators better prepare students and parents to increase their participation and to exercise social vigilance.**

From 1996 to 1998, over 370 people were trained in civic education, at least 250 of whom were parents and teachers. Over 27 NGOs and community groups participated in the trainings. For example, in two schools on the Colombian side of the Colombian/Venezuela border 25 students, 100 teachers, and 15 parents were trained by DECIPOL-UNIANDES. A follow-up survey of participating civic educators indicated that 70 percent are using the information in their classes and promoting ideas discussed in the training, such as encouraging participation in student government.

**Objective B: Beneficiaries of civic education better understand their political systems and the possibilities for participation in them.**

The indicator for this objective is tracked by looking at the number of organizations that are trained in civic education and replicate or undertake civic education activities. Aggregate data are not yet available. However, for example, Conciencia trained 20 educators in a pilot program to work towards this objective. In addition, a regional workshop, “Advocacy: Working for Change,” was held in April 1999, which 23 Network organizations attended.

In 1998, Conciencia convened NGOs from **Paraguay, Brazil, and Uruguay** for training in implementation of a curriculum titled *Formación Ética y Ciudadana*, designed for Argentina with support from the World Bank in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. Organizations in Paraguay and Brazil requested further assistance from Conciencia for adaptation and application of the curriculum in their countries.

Conciencia began working in **Paraguay** but found it was unable to continue, since efforts in Brazil had become so intense. Nevertheless, one of the AMs interviewed in Asunción, *Sumando*, expressed appreciation for Conciencia’s assistance in the development of a “values education” curriculum. This assistance was provided during a seminar on civic education conducted by Conciencia in Buenos Aires, described by Sumando as being of very high quality. Interviewees also cited Conciencia’s openness in offering materials, freedom to adapt them, and the on-going discussion and support provided. Although Sumando has been unable to implement the program, due to changes in the Ministry of Education, they are using the materials in other parts of their work and say that the approach “permeates” their activities.

In 1997, AM *Voto Consciente* (VC) participated in the CIVITAS conference in Argentina and, as follow-up, requested assistance from Conciencia for the development of a civic education curriculum. VC began introducing the curriculum within a network of private Jewish schools in Sao Paulo and has collaborated with the Sao Paulo State Education Secretariat in its process of education for responsible citizenship. To help forge a partnership, a high-level official of that Secretariat also traveled to Buenos Aires to meet with the team that developed the civic education program there. Over the last

three years, VC has signed agreements with the Secretariat and has been invited to begin training teachers on a pilot basis. This AM cited the value of Conciencia's guidance and mentorship in development of the civic education program. This initiative by VC with Conciencia support was found to be very promising and is currently under development.

UniAndes supervised and managed the drafting of a Facilitator's Manual on *Vivamos Nuestra Democracia*, which included the participation of various NGOs from the state of Apure in **Venezuela**. This civic education manual was for use in schools in the frontier area between Apure, Venezuela and Arauca, Colombia by students, teachers, parents, and local community leaders.

**d. Voter Education**

**Objective A: Citizens participate actively in monitoring elections.**

In October 1997, Poder Ciudadano co-sponsored a workshop with the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights titled "Civil Society Elections Monitoring" in which 20 organizations were trained. Since then, no further activities toward this objective have taken place; no further data are being collected.

**Objective B: CSOs provide systematic public information about election candidates to better prepare the public to vote.**

Over the course of at least nine international and national workshops, 13 CSOs were trained, some of which attended two or three workshops, while others attended only one. Seven of the CSOs trained have produced candidate databases, and one has created a database about government officials.

Poder Ciudadano is the only FM working with this component. This FM focuses on voter education, government transparency, anti-corruption, and related issues. In 1993, Poder developed a specialized database to help educate citizens about candidates to electoral posts, public functionaries, judges, and in general, anyone involved with the interests of the community. Training is provided for the installation and use of the database, along with workshops on such issues as parliamentary transparency. Poder has trained AMs from **Ecuador, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Panama, Venezuela, and Guatemala**. The process of installing and using the database generally relies on the ability of the organization trained to recruit volunteers for the data collection phase (interviews with candidates, etc.). It also requires the analysis and publication of the data collected and contact with the mass media for the dissemination of results.

In Coahuila, **Mexico**, with AM *Alianza Cívica*, prior to the election of the governor of Saltillo, Poder trained over 22 citizens (15 women, 7 men) from different municipalities in the use of the database. Participant evaluations indicate that the group understood that it was important for civil society to know the candidates, especially in a one-party democracy and that power rests with the citizens. Meanwhile, for all elections held in Chiapas since 1997, AM *ANCIFEM* has carried out a candidate database activity.

With AM *Acción Ciudadana* (AC) in **Guatemala**, Poder conducted a training of trainers workshop on the database methodology. Participants included 75 volunteers. Remarks by AC interviewees are included in a subsequent section of this report. Also in Guatemala, in February 1999, Poder—with TA from Acción—held the first regional workshop on participation and monitoring by civil society of the public sector. This was a three-day event, and three major topics were covered: the Political Database, Parliamentary Transparency, and Volunteer Work. The coordinator of USAID/Guatemala’s civil society project also attended.

In **Ecuador**, Poder trained AM *Corporación Latinoamericana para el Desarrollo* (CLD) and Panamanian AM *Fundación para el Desarrollo de la Libertad Ciudadana* in the use of the database. During our site visit, CLD demonstrated that it is not only using the Poder database but has also taken it to a further stage of development by producing special software linked to a scanner for the incorporation of news clippings and other documents related to candidates and public officials. CLD plans to use the new software to produce and sell special reports on political leaders as a source of income.

In preparation for the May 1999 elections in **Panama**, Poder Ciudadano provided additional training to AM *Fundación para el Desarrollo de la Libertad Ciudadana* on establishment and operation of a database of candidate profiles. The AM used its training to develop a voter education guide called “*Candidatos Visibles*,” which was published and issued as a supplement to the major daily newspapers shortly before the elections and publicized on television as well. AM staff reported that, as a result of the voter guide and ensuing publicity, candidates became much more forthcoming about their backgrounds and positions than they had been in the past. The *Fundación* described the relationship with Poder Ciudadano and the opportunity to share experiences with them as “very important” and “fundamental” to the process of implementing their vision of increasing citizen participation.

e. **Social Responsibility**

**Objective A: Resource mobilization plans for NGOs or grassroots groups developed and approved in a participatory manner.**

The database shows that 49 NGOs were trained under this objective during five training events. Three of these developed and obtained approval for resource mobilization plans. Three had developed plans and were awaiting approval. Eight NGOs did not develop plans. Data on the other CSOs have not been provided. POA, DECIPOL-UNIANDES, and Participa have worked in activities under this objective; however, Participa is generally the lead organization that tracks result data.

**Objective B: The concept of social responsibility is disseminated more widely.**

The same 49 NGOs trained under Objective A were also trained under this objective. Seven NGOs out of 19 responding by mail said they undertook activities to promote this concept, and 12 said that they did not. Thirty NGOs have not answered the questionnaire. Work in this area began in 1996 with a meeting in Chile. Since then, Participa has disseminated information through training workshops and a 1997 seminar in Paraguay, plus the work in Bolivia, Peru, Chile, and Paraguay.

In support of social responsibility, Participa and UniAndes collaborated on the publication of a manual covering NGO fund-raising. Also, Conciencia has developed a training course on fund-raising for NGOs, based on the technique taught at the University of Indiana. These materials overlap two component areas: social responsibility and institutional strengthening or capacity building.

Participa has been working in **Paraguay, Bolivia, Chile, and Peru** to promote increased social responsibility at both the national and regional level. A meeting of seven foundation and business leaders from the four countries (one woman, six men) was convened in Lima by Participa in December 1998. This was a strategic planning workshop, at which the group drafted the basic elements of the Program for the Promotion of Social Responsibility, its mission, objectives, principles, and plans of action by country. It was determined that training and strategic planning at the national level would follow. As reported by Participa, those responsible for the program in each country received \$3,000 in complementary funds from POA and Participa in order to support this initiative and the activities to be carried out for the promotion of social responsibility in those countries.

Participa has worked closely with the POA Paraguay/Kansas chapter to promote relations between Paraguayan business leaders and local NGOs. The NGOs received training in the development of fundable projects, while the business leaders identified by Participa with the help of the POA chapter received training on the concept of social responsibility. This group later determined to promote this concept within their country. Partners' headquarters in Washington and the Paraguayan POA chapter organized an 18-day study trip for a group of six entrepreneurs interested in community foundations and the promotion of philanthropy. They visited Colombia, Kansas, Miami, and Washington and later reported that their visit was key to motivating them to get involved; the group joined the Association of Christian Entrepreneurs to work on promoting social responsibility and philanthropy in Paraguay.

Interviewees from the social responsibility group reported that the materials received from Participa and "knowing that they had support" were both important factors. They referred to the manual prepared by Participa and UniAndes as their "Bible." They have carried out some of their own educational activities and also reported changes within their own foundations and businesses. For instance, some businessmen reported assimilating the philosophy of social responsibility by paying good salaries and benefits and trying to avoid layoffs.



**Chile:** Here the Participa-inspired social responsibility group held its second meeting in June 1999 with the participation of 17 representatives of the business sector, NGOs, and the government. It is headed by a well-placed business executive, who explained that he had worked with Participa to identify the other members. A strategic planning session was to be held some two weeks after our visit. This businessman explained that he is working to convince other leaders from this sector that social responsibility is “good business.” With regard to the regional effort, while he had attended the planning session in Lima, he explained that, in his view, before expanding to other countries, there’s a need to “work at home” to test and consolidate the group, especially with the inclusion of small business. Then, he envisions forming an organization “with a good manager.” In the third stage, efforts could be expanded to the international field, working on the macro-economic level. He feels that six years will be required to complete all stages, and that “it would be good if government would give a hand.”

**Peru:** Here, the social responsibility group is represented by *Perú 2021*, which Participa reports is to provide support, such as participating in meetings at the request of groups in the other three countries.

Participa provided training and a seed grant to the *Red San Martin*, a network of ten NGOs in the jungle region of the country. As a result, the network developed a plan to obtain funds for a regional participatory strategic planning process, raising a total of over \$6,000. Interviewees reported that the relationship with Participa had helped them organize their ideas and learn more about strategic planning. Their study trip to Chile and the documents provided by Participa had helped them learn from the experiences of other CSOs. They praised the high quality and professionalism of the Participa staff.

Participa reported a number of overall results from these activities. Participating organizations met and exchanged experience and knowledge, their administrative capacity was enhanced, and they began to form a cooperative relationship with the private sector.

**f. Institutional Strengthening/Capacity Building**

**Objective A: A Network of CSOs established which is: *recognized* for promoting the growth of citizen participation through collaboration and exchanges; *appreciated* as a resource to which member organizations turn to share information, contacts, and training; and *respected* as a voice for civil society in discussions with governments and the market sector.**

This objective was developed to help capture the nature of the Network itself in the M&E system. One indicator is the number completed of the following: establishment of the structure and processes for making administrative and programmatic decisions, establishment of categories and criteria for membership, establishment of program components, strategic planning for the Network and the development of its programs, and establishment of communication systems. POA reports that the IADN has achieved 100 percent of this indicator. The second indicator is the number of members in the Network.

As of 1999, there were 75 active AMs (see **Annex H** for list), six FMs, and two collaborating members. The Network has also gathered data towards a third indicator for this objective—examples of instances in which the IADN represented the voice of Latin American civil society. On two notable occasions, the IADN served as an outreach mechanism to the broader NGO community for the purpose of expressing the “voice of civil society.” The first involved the insertion of language developed by FMs into Summit of the Americas documents. The second was a joint IADN–Esquel Group Foundation activity in which they helped the IDB to elicit civil society input for its local government development plans. Together, the Network and Esquel reached over 125 CSOs in 14 countries.

**Objective B: Member organizations make use of the capacity-building resources to which they are introduced through participation in the Network (i.e., information on nonprofit management).**

Work toward this objective is measured through the number of organizations trained in institutional strengthening methods. To date, at least 37 organizations were trained by Participa and Conciencia.

This component is implemented in two ways: through training/TA and matching grants. This evaluation found that, under different labels (institutional strengthening, capacity building, institutional growth, etc.), Objective B of this component now relates mostly to FM support to AMs. As already noted, there appears to be considerable overlap between the NGO-strengthening efforts included under Social Responsibility and the fundraising and other organizational support provided here. In fact, Participa and Conciencia use this support to complement their efforts in other components. That is, when work with an AM in one area reveals the need for institutional strengthening in order to better complete that work, TA or a matching grant may be offered.

Examples include: 1) Participa, together with UniAndes, as well as Conciencia have published manuals for training NGOs in the area of fundraising; and 2) AM Esquel Foundation in Ecuador, which has an impressive track record in terms of resource development, is under contract to USAID/Ecuador to strengthen the fundraising capacity of Ecuadorian justice-sector NGOs, including another AM. Apparently, to date there has been no effort within the Network to exchange information concerning the various approaches used and the results obtained in order to strengthen this activity for the benefit of all concerned.

Participa reports that, by early 1997, the need arose among targeted AMs for training in different areas of organizational development in order to deal with the challenges present in the environment. Thus, as part of its work plan, Participa designed a response to those needs. The two approaches adopted were: 1) training NGOs and grassroots groups in topics such as teamwork, effective communication, and leadership, and 2) the provision of “seed” grants to replicate the knowledge acquired or to strengthen institutional operations. From 1997 to the present, three workshops had been held (Bolivia, Paraguay, and Peru), and grants had been provided.

In **Peru**, Participa worked with CEPSCO to implement a program to increase youth participation in the municipality of Soritor. CEPSCO's program trains youth in this region to get involved in the community. With the help of Participa, CEPSCO is using the Chilean national youth initiative as a model. CEPSCO personnel had extremely positive remarks about the training and TA they had received. In fact, when their office did a SWOT analysis, their relationship with Participa was one of the greatest strengths noted. Participa also provided training and a seed grant to the *Red San Martin*. This Peruvian NGO network used the funds to hold a workshop in which they began a regional participatory strategic planning process.

**Brazil:** Interviewees who participated in activities carried out by Conciencia in this component reported improvements in the area of institutional vision, internal organization, and fundraising capabilities. Associate Member *AMNPPA* worked with Conciencia to form a group of 14 NGOs in Porto Alegre interested in strengthening their organizational capacities. At AMNPPA's request, Conciencia carried out a workshop on organizational self-assessment and planning in 1997. Conciencia and the Porto Alegre NGOs then worked together to survey organizational interests and training needs, which identified demand for training in fundraising. Conciencia then sought the collaboration of the University of Indiana in applying the successful fundraising approach developed there. It involves all parts of the organization in the resource development effort and calls for a total review of all internal procedures and systems. So, working with AMNPPA, Conciencia invited two individuals licensed by the university to conduct fundraising training with the 14 NGOs. A number of the organizations that had been trained reported beneficial results, including improvement of internal accounting and strategic planning systems. One representative indicated that her organization had undertaken a process of internal restructuring as a result of the knowledge gained at the seminar. Others indicated that they had learned and applied specific new techniques to reinforce their fundraising strategies. As part of the course, each organization identified a fundraising goal and developed a strategy to achieve it. One organization reported a 12 percent increase in the amount of funds raised and a 43 percent increase in the number of donors in the first part of 1999, compared to the same period in 1998. Although the interviewee indicated that the entire increase was probably not due solely to the training, he did attribute a significant part of it to that experience. As an example of the "multiplier effect," two organizations that participated in the seminar had, in turn, trained another 40 organizations, though handicapped by the lack of resources to duplicate training materials.

### **3. Future Challenges**

In addition to the results reported, a number of challenges were also identified by Network members as they work toward long-term impact on citizen participation. It was noted that creation of a network and the networking process is only a means for members to achieve effective results, rather than an end in itself. The challenges identified fall into two major categories: those within the control of the Network and those that fall beyond its control. While some of the issues raised will be discussed more fully in later sections

of this report, the following is a summary of the major challenges mentioned by interviewees.

Internal: Need for a carefully-crafted and truly strategic plan to guide future decisions, moving from the current focus on process to addressing key substantive issues (one of the early designers asserted that, from the beginning a “strong conceptual framework” has been lacking); transition from supply-driven to demand-driven approach; “democratization,” making the Network more horizontal with greater participation by all members in decision-making and the sharing of resources; improved governance structure and administrative procedures; increased exchange of ideas and information; expansion of the funding base.

External: Erosion of the enabling environment, with authoritarianism growing in some parts of the region; persistence of poverty in all countries and seriously deteriorating economic conditions in some; diminishing attention to and support for Latin America on the part of the donor community.

## **D. SUSTAINABILITY**

### **Overall Sustainability**

Interviewees were queried about the sustainability of their IADN-supported activities, and of the Network itself, in the event that no further funding is received from USAID after the August 2000 completion date of the current grant. While responses varied, there was general concern about the total dependence of the Network on a single funding source. Some interviewees recommended that IADN put into practice the methodologies it is teaching others in the area of fundraising, starting with SWOT\* analysis and strategic planning to sharpen objectives and produce fundable proposals. Overall, there was a sense of urgency in terms of finding other funding sources, whether or not USAID continues its support.

### **FM-AM Cooperation**

Most FMs asserted that, while they would continue working in the area of citizen participation in their own countries, it is unlikely that they would be able to maintain the current level of effort in other countries in the absence of continued USAID assistance to do so. In cases where Network activities have not been integrated into the organization’s main program priorities, continuation was seen as unlikely unless further funding is obtained. Overall, there was a strong feeling among FMs that, without time to consolidate the gains made to date, the possibility of capitalizing on the investment of time and money already made would be lost.

### **AM Programs**

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\* SWOT refers to Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats.

Among AMs, responses to the question of whether they would continue to use the methodologies they learned seemed to vary in accordance with two factors: a) the size and financial strength of the organization, and b) the component in which they have received assistance. Larger AMs stated that, while they hoped the IADN could continue and become stronger in the future, their activities did not depend on the availability of TA and training through the Network. Organizations working in the deliberation component, regardless of size, reported that, since they have now learned that methodology, they intended to continue using adapted versions of it as part of their regular programming. A number of those working in other components felt that the continued assistance of the FM would be necessary if their activities are to succeed.

Some AMs have developed strategic alliances with other NGOs and government agencies in the course of applying the techniques transferred by the FM. These alliances may heighten prospects for longer-term sustainability. Other AMs mentioned the importance of their own commitment to using the methodologies learned as elements of their organizational strategies. FMs appear to have learned in working with AMs that obtaining their formal commitment to using what was to be learned was key to successful collaboration.

Technical sustainability was also raised as an issue by some AM interviewees. Aside from the question of financial resources, a number of them indicated that lack of follow-up had limited their capacity to sustain IADN-sponsored activities. This suggests the need to include a provision for follow-up in the design of program activities.

## Chapter V – CONCLUSIONS

Based on direct observation and an analysis of available data, evaluators reached the following general conclusions concerning the implementation to date of activities funded through this grant.

1. The Network has shown itself to be a valuable mechanism for engaging Latin American organizations in the promotion of citizen participation in efforts to strengthen democratic governance in the region. It is about to enter a period of transition, during which the gains made to date could be consolidated through a process of careful, participatory planning. This would include the identification of strategically important challenges to further democratization currently present in the environment and the improvement of the Network's communications system, governance structure, and decision-making procedures.
2. Working with the Network has increased participating organizations' resource base, enabled them to develop new contacts and a greater national and international presence, and increased their capability to carry out citizen participation activities.
3. Initial evidence suggests that the Network has helped increase citizen participation in the region. Findings indicate a wide range of examples of such impact. However, this is difficult to document in a systematic fashion. In general, it is costly and difficult to collect data regarding the impact of citizen participation activities. The Network has been developing a monitoring and evaluation system; however, it is not yet in full operation. There is significant overlap between activities in the six program components, all of which tend to be process-oriented, leading to the risk of double-counting and confusion when attempting to assess results.
4. While there were benefits associated with using six components to plan Network programs when the IADN got started (a supply-driven strategy), a demand-driven approach would produce more effective results in the future. By limiting services to pre-determined components, the most pressing needs of the organizations served are not always taken into account, thus diminishing prospects for longer-term sustainability. A demand-driven approach within previously identified parameters would likely produce more effective results.
5. While, over time, the FMs have increasingly coalesced as a group, they have continued to work separately, as though each had its own grant. Issues of organizational self-interest and control placed an undue burden on the process.
6. In the early phase, confusion among FMs with regard to Partners' program management and coordination role affected Network development. The need to establish systems and procedures created additional challenges and confusion between USAID-imposed requirements and those mandated by Partners, particularly

with regard to administrative procedures, pointing to the need for the periodic review of procedures.

7. With regard to relations between Founding and Associate Members, most interviewees reported strong professional ties. While FMs have taken advantage of opportunities to establish communication with AMs, adequate communication and opportunities for the exchange of experience and information across the entire Network is a key challenge that needs to be addressed if the Network is to grow and prosper.
8. While the structure of the Network has been hierarchical to reflect the transference of methodologies from FMs to AMs, most IADN members feel it is now time to adopt a more horizontal approach. The existence of two classes of membership has led to resentment among AMs, especially those that feel they have much to offer the Network but are only invited to receive services. Use of the term “Founding Member” could become a means for simply recognizing Network pioneers, rather than for designating decision-making status and funding eligibility.
9. In nearly all cases, the issue of follow-up by Network members after the provision of services is key to the sustainability of the activities assisted, the level of confidence engendered among participants, and the accurate assessment of the results obtained.
10. The deliberation methodology has been successfully transferred to a sizable number of target AMs which, for the most part, have adapted it and incorporated it into their work. In some instances, deliberation has served as a means to stimulate advocacy or initiate specific projects. In other cases, where deliberation is viewed as an end in itself, subsequent action is left up to participants, with no follow-up by sponsors. While there is evidence that deliberation as a means can produce concrete results, there are as yet no data to demonstrate that, if seen as an end, deliberation increases citizen participation.
11. Given that there are significant differences in the way in which deliberative forums are structured and conducted and that the Network has accumulated an impressive amount of experience in this area, it is uniquely well-positioned to analyze these differences as related to the results obtained to help inform the future international efforts of the Kettering Foundation and others interested in this methodology.
12. The creation of the Central American sub-network is an interesting initiative that provides insight into a number of aspects of network building. Through the process of creating country chapters, members learned to work together towards a common goal. However, the chapters are still very weak and would need help in such areas as strategic planning, team-building, communication, and conflict management if they are to be consolidated. Further strengthening could be achieved by moving beyond deliberation to incorporate other approaches to citizen participation. Also, the experience points to the need for more fluid communication and information sharing mechanisms across countries with less developed technological infrastructures.

13. Relations between POA and USAID have been very positive. There is potential for greater interaction between IADN members and USAID missions that could be explored to identify areas of mutual interest and potential funding opportunities. A number of mission portfolios include areas such as human rights, justice sector reform, civil society, or municipal development, all of which involve citizen participation in democratic governance. Moreover, a good number of Network members work in other USAID strategic sectors, including environment, health and nutrition, education, and economic growth. Conversely, citizen participation is an important element in mission programs in other sectors, such as environment and health. Contact between missions and the IADN could be pursued by Network members and facilitated by the sponsoring organization and the LAC Bureau through direct contact with mission personnel and the sharing of timely information about Network activities. This effort could be further reinforced if Network members took the initiative to brief themselves on the strategic plans of the missions.



## Chapter VI – RECOMMENDATIONS\*

As part of the interview process, those contacted were invited to make recommendations for strengthening the Network in the future. While literally dozens of recommendations were offered, they tended to fall into the same major themes. They were therefore categorized and consolidated, resulting in the following overall recommendations. Specific aspects of these recommendations, along with the suggestions presented for how they might be implemented are also discussed.

- 1. Strategic Planning:** The Network should take advantage of the time still available under the USAID grant to formulate a Strategic Plan to help ensure its continued operation and guide its actions over the next three to five years. Such a plan should be developed through a participatory process, involving all concerned in the identification of strategic priorities, based on an analysis of current political realities within the region, IADN experience to date, and the design of appropriately targeted program initiatives.

### Discussion

The Network has the luxury of an eight-month transition period from January to August 2000. This should be used to involve all interested parties in a process of participatory planning for the future. This would include consultation with political analysts, the national and international donor community, and other organizations. It would also include an examination of how other networks operate, especially those with which IADN members are affiliated. (Transparency International, whose secretariat holds monthly teleconferences with national affiliates and helps raise funds for their proposals, or the NDI Civic Network with its communication system and resource directory, were mentioned as examples.)

A good number of interviewees recommended that activities not be divided geographically, but that they focus on actions or substantive programs that link members in accordance with their interests.

- 2. Allocation of Resources During the Transition:** Grant funds remaining for the year 2000 should be used for two major purposes: a) to complete processes already underway that are of strategic importance to the Network, and b) to support joint activities by Founding Members.

### Discussion

There was a difference of opinion among founders concerning the allocation of available grant funds once current sub-grants expire in December. The majority recommended that funds be used for priority activities, rather than simply being divided into equal parts. It

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\* Recommendations were supported by all Founding Members, and a process for their implementation was agreed upon at their October 1999 meeting in Washington.

was strongly recommended, for example, that this period be dedicated to formulation of a longer-term strategic plan and for testing new approaches to internal communication and joint action in priority issue areas. Others expressed reservations but may favor a continuation of the equal distribution of funds. One concern shared by founders was that current commitments in support of strategically-important processes already underway not be prematurely terminated, leaving counterparts disillusioned and in an awkward position vis-à-vis their own clients. These involve, for instance, plans for the consolidation of national or regional networks, capacity-building at the municipal or grassroots level, issue campaigns already launched, and so forth. All strongly recommended that this question be discussed at the October meeting of FMs, with a decision taken by the group at that time.

- 3. Communication & Visibility:** To support the consolidation of the Network and the full integration of all members, a regular, programmed system of communication should be designed and put into operation. The new system should be used to facilitate participation in the strategic planning process and should include the continuation and expansion of the web page, plus the use of other electronic means. It should also promote greater visibility of the Network through contact with national and international donors, the media, and other key actors.

## **Discussion**

By far the largest number of recommendations from interviewees called for strengthening communications within the Network in the future. In support of this recommendation, one AM interviewee asserted: “Information is the source of income of the future and is very deficient within the Network.” The lack of channels for the exchange of experience and information was also seen by FMs as a major obstacle to the consolidation of the Network. A significant number of AMs called for improved communications across the Network—not just with cognizant FMs, but also with members in other countries. They felt that sharing agendas of members’ activities and other information is necessary in order to achieve the real integration of the Network. Some also recommended that information be arranged into categories, so that interested parties can access relevant material more directly. Among the improvements recommended were: monthly e-mails; a newsletter; local, national, or regional meetings on a regular basis; an annual meeting of all Network members; and exchange visits among members with similar interests.\*

A number of recommendations were made to enhance the visibility of the Network, as it was felt that its existence and programs should be made more public. For example, one interviewee noted that members have never been mandated to disseminate information about the Network, recommending that there be a *Carta de Deberes de Miembros* (Charter of the Duties of Members) which would require them to do so. Another recommendation was that each member be urged to hold an annual “Information

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\* Various FM representatives serving on the Extended Team made a point of noting that the “cross evaluation” process had permitted them to become acquainted with the work carried out by member organizations based in the countries visited and lamented that this type of process had not been carried out previously and periodically.

Meeting” for local and international donors and other key actors to brief them about the Network and its current activities; if desirable, members in the same city could co-sponsor such an event.

- 4. Membership & Governance:** There should be an orderly expansion of Network membership, and decision-making should be democratized, allowing for participation by all. The governance structure should be reorganized, becoming horizontal rather than hierarchical and ensuring that all members have the same opportunities to receive grants, give sub-grants, or request services.

## **Discussion**

It was strongly recommended by a number of interviewees that Network membership be opened to any NGO that is willing to make a serious commitment to its mission and purpose. A large number of those contacted strongly recommended that there be a single class of active member (i.e., this does not apply to the existing “Cooperating Member” category). Associate Members were virtually unanimous in that opinion, and founders also tended to agree. It was suggested that *Founding Member* become an honorary title awarded to the six original organizations as a form of recognition for their pioneering efforts, rather than as a designation of attributes superior to those of other members. It was generally acknowledged that the key issue is, in reality, the allocation of resources and the basis on which those decisions are made.

To overcome that dilemma, one AM representative strongly recommended: a) that the IADN dedicate its efforts to three or four issues of strategic importance currently facing citizen participation in the democratization process, and b) that it offer funding to any two or more Network members that join together to present proposals to address those issues. Funds would then be awarded to those most capable of carrying out the work. It was further noted that RFPs could be issued several times a year or whenever new resources are obtained by the Network. It was argued that this would have a number of advantages: provide incentives for serious membership; help to consolidate the Network by stimulating collaboration; produce more concrete and significant results, which is appealing to donors; and have a greater impact on the building of democracy in Latin America. On the other hand, this approach could have one disadvantage—introducing competition into a Network could weaken overall collaboration. Another interviewee recommended that the Network be managed through a rotating coordinating committee of three member NGOs, with no one of them having sole decision-making authority. One recommendation was for adoption of a committee-structure to deal with the different aspects of Network operations. It was further suggested that the transition period from January to August next year would be an ideal time to try out whatever new system is adopted.

These are just a few of the ideas offered by the individuals interviewed. Clearly, the IADN as a group will need to weigh the pros and cons of each recommendation and come to consensus on the future structure of the Network.

- 5. Activities & Impact:** Geographic divisions and the compartmentalization of the Network’s offerings into six discrete components should be eliminated in favor of an approach which is at once more strategic and more demand-driven. Moreover, in planning future activities, Network members should give serious consideration to the importance of follow-up for the achievement of longer-term impact and the potential for sustainability.

### **Discussion**

A number of interviewees held that, in the next phase, there should be greater flexibility as to where Network members work and what they do; it should not be simply “more of the same.” It was noted that the “end all” has been to use the various methodologies and that now the Network needs to be issue-oriented and problem-solving. The importance of follow-up was raised by a large number of AMs, who strongly recommended that it be built into all Network programming to better ensure the longer-term impact of the assistance provided. Some noted that, otherwise, Network activities raise participants’ expectations but do not give them the tools to achieve them.

- 6. Administrative Capacity:** The administrative capacity of all network organizations receiving funding—grantees and sub-grantees alike—should be assessed, and resources should be identified for providing training or technical assistance to those that are weak in this area.

### **Discussion**

Based on experience in the area of administration, the POA Financial Office recommended that, when providing grants or sub-grants to IADN member organizations, care be taken to accurately assess their administrative capacity and to ensure that necessary support is provided to strengthen those that are weak in this area. Bookkeeping, accounting, reporting, and other systems are important elements of the administrative process that makes possible the accurate and timely reporting of appropriate substantive and financial information. It was further recommended that, if possible, information/training sessions be held with the administrators of grantee organizations to facilitate a common understanding of contractual requirements and better ensure the efficiency of administrative operations.

- 7. Continued support:** In considering whether to continue funding Network operations as a vehicle for pursuing its DG strategic objective, USAID should recognize the cost–benefit advantages of capitalizing on its initial investment, especially now that the difficult task of start-up has been accomplished, valuable lessons have been learned, and results to date are most promising

### **Discussion**

All IADN members expressed a desire for continuation and strengthening of the Network. Founders were particularly concerned that there be an opportunity to

consolidate efforts to date and maximize the momentum that has been generated in support of increased citizen participation in the democratization of the region. Most felt that at least another two to three years would be required to incorporate needed changes in Network operations and to map out and implement a strategy for obtaining funding from other sources. They also felt that, if it is not possible for USAID to continue its support (due to budget cuts or shifting Congressional priorities), it would be important for Agency representatives to help find and cultivate other donors, particularly during the transition period next year. (It was noted by Kettering representatives that their Foundation would be willing to help facilitate such fund-raising efforts.)

POA believes Network members need to be more proactive in generating funding for IADN activities. It was pointed out that willingness to do so is a good indicator of organizational commitment to Network activities—and a good guarantee of success.

## Chapter VII – LESSONS LEARNED

The following lessons learned were drawn from the experience gained through the activities supported by this grant and are presented by the Core Team in the hope they may be useful to any donors or organizations interested in the creation or successful operation of collaborative efforts designed to promote sustainable development.

1. Networks are created for a variety of reasons and take various forms. Some, like the IADN, are established to tap funding opportunities in order to address broad, cross-cutting themes such as citizen participation. Other networks form to pursue narrower, specific goals (i.e., environment, education, health, justice sector reform, etc.) and together develop a strategy to seek the necessary funding. Whichever comes first—the opportunity or the need—it is important to realize that the context in which the network forms will affect its evolution as well as, perhaps, the ease with which and degree of cohesiveness it is able to achieve.
2. Latin American CSOs working in the democracy area are eager to take advantage of the contacts, support, validation, and opportunities for the exchange of information and experience that a network can offer.
3. A key ingredient for the successful creation and operation of any network, consortium, or other multi-actor initiative is *clarity*—clarity of purpose, roles, responsibilities, decision-making, and other procedures, all of which should be made clear and agreed upon by all interested parties at the outset and reviewed periodically as conditions change and questions arise.
4. The exchange of experience and information and the maintenance of fluid communication among members are essential for the successful integration of participating organizations in any network or similar entity.
5. If resource limitations demand that a choice be made between providing short-term services to a large number of organizations scattered over a particular geographic area, as compared with more in-depth assistance and follow-up to a smaller, more targeted group, the latter approach should be adopted if sustainability is a concern of the sponsor.
6. Within networks or consortia of southern CSOs, it is likely that members vary greatly in terms of their organizational skills and capacity. Therefore, to strengthen the entire enterprise and better ensure the sustainability of individual and collective efforts, in addition to program support, there is a need to provide organizational development assistance to weaker members, as well as to the network itself. This means recognizing and allowing for less-visible, institution-building support. If a network does not have the funds needed to provide this service itself, it should serve as a clearinghouse to guide fragile member organizations to cost-effective sources of assistance in this area.

7. The potential value added of working with U.S. PVOs is to help southern CSO networks or consortia maintain fluid relations with donors, administer resources, and work to assist members find new opportunities for resource development and contacts in the international development community.
8. Within a network, it is important to decentralize as far as possible the decision-making process and governance structure. While it is generally not feasible for all network members to participate in every decision, they should be represented on and have access to a committee or other body of individuals they agree to empower to make decisions on their behalf (i.e., an executive secretariat or board).
9. To help ensure the effective institutionalization of any new methodologies or techniques transferred from one organization to another, the services provided should be demand-driven and based on the most felt needs of the recipient institution.
10. There are two major purposes for deliberation: public education and taking decisions for action. In countries without a strong CSO sector, forums among already-formed groups, or among members of an organization, are much more amenable to decision-making, as subsequent action can be channeled through the organization that sponsors the forum. Meanwhile, forums among strangers, or people who have not yet agreed to work together, can be effective primarily for educational purposes. The utility of both uses of deliberation needs to be clarified and assessed prior to launching any such initiative.
11. The success of efforts to achieve collaboration between organizations belonging to two distinct networks will depend not only on their interest in the same programmatic objectives and the availability of resources, but also on the types and interests of their members and staff and the intensity and duration of the activities to be undertaken.
12. Evaluating civil society programs is a difficult task, as the definition of “success” and the selection of indicators to measure that success are too often left open for interpretation. It is hard to “know it when you see it.” Even more difficult challenges arise when evaluating a regional network, with members scattered across a continent. Adopting participatory evaluation techniques can help overcome some of these challenges, since much of the knowledge and expertise needed can be found within the evaluation team itself.
13. Participatory evaluation approaches in which both donor and grantee participate strengthen mutually beneficial communication and learning, which can enhance the future success of the activity. To be effective and legitimate, however, both parties must be aware of the potential risk of conflict of interest, making very clear the line between evaluating and planning. The inclusion of an outside facilitator on the evaluation team can provide insurance against undue bias and, thus, enhance confidence in the validity of the outcome.